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**THE GOSPEL MESSAGE IN
GREAT PICTURES**

101
The
Gospel Message in
Great Pictures

By
JAMES CARTER, D.D.



FUNK AND WAGNALLS COMPANY
NEW YORK AND LONDON
1929

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DEDICATION

TO HER WHOSE GENTLE URGENCE, DISCRIMINATING
CRITICISM, UNFALTERING FAITH AND COURAGE HAVE
MADE POSSIBLE THIS BOOK, SO LONG IN PREPARATION,
WHO HAS WALKED WITH ME ON THE LONG TRAIL
WHICH HAS LED US TO THE LAND OF OUR DREAMS,—
WITH FULL APPRECIATION OF HOW VITAL HAS BEEN
HER COOPERATION, TO MY GIFTED AND GRACIOUS WIFE
THIS BOOK IS LOVINGLY DEDICATED.

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PREFACE

The sermons herein assembled were selected from a series delivered on Sunday evenings, the purpose being to enlist Art in the service of the Gospel. The teaching of some noted picture or some association with its history or with the artist's life was employed to impress the practical instruction of the text. Each hearer received a copy of the picture for clearer understanding of the message.* Most of the pictures were taken home to appear on the walls of the sitting-room or elsewhere, continuing the influence of both picture and sermon. The popularity of the method was demonstrated by the increase of the evening audience. The courtesy of the authors and publishing houses hereinafter mentioned, in granting permission to print the excerpts detailed below, is hereby gratefully acknowledged:

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I

CHRIST IN THE HOME



Courtesy of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

The Gospel Message in Great Pictures

I

CHRIST IN THE HOME

"Their eyes were opened
and they knew Him."
Luke, 24:31.

PRICELESS as may be the instruction of art, not infrequently is there a sense of disappointment and disapproval when the art-lover gazes at the best productions of the most famous artists. With all the marvel of technical execution there is not seldom a deplorable lack of soul. The archeological knowledge of the great masters was not up to modern requirements, and the eye of the informed is most often offended by a grotesque mixture of the Classical with the Renaissance, of the Occidental with quasi-Oriental apparel in the draping of the subjects. Titian has his Venetian poultry woman and his

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diamond-patterned wall in his famous "Presentation at the Temple." Veronese has his group of sixteenth century artists in the middle foreground of his huge "Marriage at Cana of Galilee"; and in the left corner Vittoria Colonna picks her teeth with a gold toothpick. Even Raffael in his world-known "Transfiguration" puts St. Lawrence and St. Julian beneath a tree on the mountain-top, to the contradiction of the Biblical record. The incomparable "Sistine Madonna" is marred by the presence of St. Barbara, who belongs to the fourth century, and St. Sixtus, who belongs to the third.

In one room in the Louvre Gallery in Paris hang two pictures by Leonardo da Vinci, entitled, respectively, "John the Baptist" and "Bacchus," evidently painted from the same model, with the Da Vinci smile. These two subjects can be distinguished only by the fact that one carries a cross. Of the famous picture of Murillo, known as "The Immaculate Conception," portraying the Virgin in a glory of light, upborne by clouds and with the moon at her feet, the celebrated art-critic, Sir Charles Eastlake, wrote:

"To the educated taste it will appear utterly devoid of religious feeling, objectionable in color, and deficient in the higher qualities of pictorial skill. The dark blue scarf arranged in impossible folds contrasts crudely with the glare of yellow light behind

the Virgin, whose attitude and expression are affected, while the pink and white flesh-tints of the celestial host may be noted as further evidence of the artificial and stagey nature of the work."

Yet that picture is by some accounted as one of the twelve greatest canvases in the world.

It was the object of the brotherhood of painters, called the Pre-Raphaelites, to return to the simplicity and earnestness of the earlier masters to make sure of the correctness of their work as a copy of nature, to paint not from the unaided imagination, but from the very scene or object or action, from the drapery or armor or furniture or living model, and so to obtain a true semblance of the very thing designed. That spirit pervades the atmosphere of present-day art, and the greater modern painters are following the same or similar canons. The cavalry charge in Meissonier's "Friedland" represents a field of wheat which actually had been ridden over by cavalrymen. Holman Hunt's "Scapegoat" was painted in the wilderness and from a forlorn, neglected, starved creature wandering there.

One modern school of painters, chiefly French, has conceived and executed a combination recent in art. The motif is within the realm of allegorical portraiture, and the method consists in combining the past and the present, not ignorantly, but with such

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definition of accurate synchronism as to arrest the attention and enforce its teaching. The past enters as spiritual and ideal; and the present exhibits the appeal of agreeable harmony or the contrast of rebuke. The method is successful or revolting as the artist possesses a spirit defective or devout. The study of this evening is of the milder and less startling employment of the method.

The artist whose work interests us this evening, Léon Augustin L'Hermitte, was born at Mont Saint-Père, to the northeast of Paris, in the year 1844. In 1874 and 1880 he received medals at the Paris Salon. In 1889 he received the medal of honor at the Universal Exhibition in Paris. He became a Chevalier of the Legion of Honor in 1884, and an officer of the same in 1894. One of his paintings, "The Vintage," is in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. A water-color and two drawings are in the Art Institute of Chicago. In the Museum of the Luxembourg in Paris is a picture of the Salon of 1882, entitled "Paying the Harvesters," which has been reproduced in photograph and engraving, and the chief figure in which is an exhausted old man sitting on a bench, with his inverted scythe between his knees. In the World's Fair at Chicago were two of his productions, one entitled "Repose," and the other, which may be found in the Museum

of Fine Arts in Boston, is that which claims our attention this evening.

When we pause a moment, and look at the canvas of L'Hermitte, with its cool tones of quiet color, we need no interpreter to tell us the artist's meaning: we need no one to give a name to the picture. There comes rushing before the mind a scene on the first Easter Day. Three pedestrians under the bright Syrian sun, surrounded by the lavish bloom of the April fields, heavy with the harvest after the latter rains. The sun hangs low over the western hills as they enter amid the houses of Emmaus. There is a pause before a house-door. One of the travelers, with a word of farewell, turns down the street; but he is detained by the urgency of his companions, who insist on his remaining with them. The three enter and sit down at supper. The guest takes a loaf and, breaking it, looks upward in thanksgiving. Astonishment is written on the two other faces, for now they recognize the countenance of their Master, dead but yesterday, but now indisputably alive.

The artist has so portrayed Him, in each hand a piece of the broken loaf, His eyes uplifted in communion with His Father. Thus much is clear. But what is the meaning of the chairs, the table and the men in European costume? Their appearance is unquestionably that of French workingmen. The

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surroundings are those of a humble French home. The artist has named his picture, "The Friend of the Humble." What does it mean?

It will not do to say that L'Hermitte, like the Renaissance masters, was ignorant of historical accessories, or indifferent to such matters. The anachronism is too violent, the ignorance, for these days, too extreme. Far other is the explanation of this bringing together of the first Christian century with the last. There is in the juxtaposition a definite purpose of instruction. The thought which the artist would impress is this: What occurred to those Hebrews on their journey and in the village home is occurring in this age and nation every day we live. We walk amid the unseen: we are accompanied by the unseen: and He who is our life would at any time cease to be unseen, if only our eyes were opened. It is not merely that our beloved are near us, attentive and interested; but that in truth He who said, "Lo! I am with you alway," is fulfilling His word to us in every moment of our life.

How great a difference it would make, if we in heart believed it! Somehow our limitations are so confining and dwarfing that it is all but impossible for us to think of God as always seeing us. He has this great world to look after. As the walls of a house shut out the sun, somehow man seems to feel

that for the larger part of the time God does not observe him. Only in aroused consciousness, in the chiding of conscience, in moments of prayer, in sorrow, in danger, in distress, does it seem to many that God is really near. Man's reason tells him that unquestionably God must see and hear and review his thoughts; but for the more part the realizing is not clear. The artist would have us think of this great truth, and, if possible, make it real to ourselves.

However, the artist has more than this in his purpose. He would have men know that not merely the homes of affluence, not only where exist culture and ease and luxury, does our Lord seek for companionship and the opportunity to impart blessing. The artist would teach us that our Lord loves to come to the home of plainness and poverty, without gilding or veneering, where is lived an arduous existence, with sweet and simple joys. The rich have so much, the comfortably off are so comfortable, it might and does seem at times to those of small possessions and dull routine as if religion might be more easy to those in larger rooms and of more varied lives. The artist would have such persons believe that they are as much in the thought of our Lord as are the most wealthy and intelligent in all the land.

So far as we know, our Lord never addressed any philosophical argument, clothed in technical lan-

guage, to the great thinkers of His day. No recorded sentence of His requires any wide philosophic grasp for its practical understanding. We may need to know the conditions of His time and nation and of the Jewish law; but not one utterance of His need have been obscure to the uneducated people about Him, to whom His talk was addressed. He did not have one gospel for the rich and another for the poor, one for the cultured and another for the illiterate.

That means a great deal, when one thinks about it. Some have never received the training to enable them to follow the contemplations of philosophy. Some could never be so trained. Multitudes have not the time or opportunity. Is it not a great thing for them to know that they can take up the record of His words and read it all and know what He wants of them and what He promises to be to them, without the least fear that there is something reserved which is beyond their understanding?

Moreover, there are times when the most able want to stop thinking great thoughts, want to let the mind down from the heights, and to think as the children and the birds think, bright and glad and unlabored thoughts. There are times when the most intellectual do not want to be roaming in the labyrinths of theological or philosophical speculations; they want something as simple as, "Come unto Me,

all ye that labor"; something like, "Suffer the little children to come unto Me." The artist would have us to understand that such is exactly what the Master is ever ready to be.

There is little or no pleasure in the presence of one who has no interest in the things that interest us. No one cares to have some grand person walk into his home formally and heartlessly, distant while near. We all are like the children in that. A child can not understand why all people are not interested in his toy, or in what he can do. The indifference disappoints and hurts him, and throws him back upon himself. We all have the same law working unconsciously in our minds. Unless our thought of our Saviour represents Him as glad in our joy and grieved in our hurt, we do not crave His presence. But all through the book of His life on earth He is showing Himself so interested and so sympathetic to those who come to Him that He has won the heart of the whole world by His pure humanness.

So to multitudes, the world over, the thought that the Saviour of the world would sit down with them at table would make home a different place. Suddenly it would become of little importance to them what the more successful people did or thought. Would that all the multitudes of earth could know that truth! We close the door of our home, and we

sit down to eat, and we ask Jesus to be our guest, and He is there. It is better than to have the highest dignitary in all the world at our table, for the dignitary might want some fuss made over him, something more of a show than we could afford; but Jesus comes and takes things just as they are, just as we have them every day. He enters the door of our home, and sits down with us, and looks at us with sweet, loving eyes. That makes home radiant. The storm and darkness are all outside. Here is peace, and enough.

There is something in the outline of the story of the two men who became hosts of the risen Christ, which is so like a frequent experience in many a life that we may well observe it to-night, especially as some persons fail to benefit by the experience, however many times it comes to them. The Master came to those disciples when their faith had been tried and all but shattered, when they were vainly attempting to think out the situation which was benumbing their reason. The sudden arrest, the swift trial, the illegal execution, and the death of Him to whom they had learned to look as Jehovah's Messiah, had startled and amazed them. The incredible story that He was alive failed to afford much help. All this confusion of contradictory events and reports and ideas was so foreign to their settled convictions con-

cerning the life of the Messiah that their minds were in a whirl of chaotic thought.

To this confusion He had come, and had flooded their souls with a conception, strange yet glorious, more excellent than their best imaginings. All that had been horrible to their affection and destructive to their faith became glorious as the sunset light about them; and it seems marvelous that they did not recognize Him before He came to the table and lifted His hands in blessing. He had come to them as the expounder of their life's mystery, and until He had completed the task they did not know Him.

How full is this life of mysterious events which call forth our exclamations of wonder, perhaps of criticism! This is a strange world. God's people do not agree. The battle with Satan is complicated by the wrangling of those who should be united in fighting against wrong. The young may be taken and the old survive; the good may be removed, while the bad remain. Almost any one can think of a number of persons whom the community might well spare, who yet live on when the valuable and even the invaluable depart. Our way is impeded needlessly, as it would seem; we suffer to no discernible purpose; we are loaded to the breaking-point, while others run free. It is wholly and hopelessly mysterious, and frequently we say so. Whether they be right or

wrong, Christians sometimes question the justice or the kindness of their Father's treatment.

It would be impossible to sketch all the various happenings and combinations of human life; but all can remember times of trial, when the hardness of the conditions seemed to be beyond explanation, when faith was weak, when perhaps for the moment it failed. Help was needed, and it seemed unmercifully long in coming. Then the sky cleared a little, enough to throw on the trial an interpreting light. Blessed are those who can see their Master in the relief; far more blessed are they who can be sure that the Master is with them all the way through. Some accept the relief with stolid, unloving sullenness. Blessed are they who can see that the great gain which came at length could not have been reached without treading the sharp, stony pathway.

Even the Old Testament men and women could perceive kindness in the hardships of life, and could give thanks to God for His love in it all. Joseph, who prayed in agony when he was lowered into the pit, and was sold as a slave and slandered by his master's wife, perceived that by the refusal of his requests and the disappointment of his hopes he was brought to the head of the Egyptian government to the saving of his father's life and his family. He saw that only by hardship could all the final happi-

ness have come. May we be as wise, we who have so much larger opportunity, so much clearer revelation.

Our Lord is always with us, as He promised; but we fail of the full advantage of His presence, because our minds are over-absorbed with the trivial things about us. We think that we are conscious of Him, and to an extent we are; but now and then there comes some vivid experience which awakens us to a knowledge that we have been going through our day's work, or even our devotions, with scant realization of what that presence would mean to us if only we were physically aware of it. To make such an impression on some minds would require a serious illness, a painful bereavement or a disastrous financial loss. The average Christian has such a hold on the world that it takes a stunning blow on the clutching hand to strike it loose from the valueless toy which delays the soul's march to the celestial city. Who of us is doing exactly what he would be doing, if he could see the sad face of the Master, looking at him, as He looked at Peter on that memorable night?

The late Dr. A. J. Gordon, of the Clarendon Street Church of Boston, once had an unusual dream. He thought that he was in the pulpit of his church, ready to begin his morning sermon, when he noticed

a stranger coming up the left aisle as if seeking a seat. A gentleman offered him a place in his own pew, which the stranger accepted. He was dressed plainly, even poorly, and there was on his face a serious look, as of one who had passed through some great sorrow. His personality had a strangely fascinating effect on the preacher, whose eyes repeatedly sought those of his new auditor. Again and again he said to himself, "Who can that stranger be?" At the close of the service he endeavored to reach the visitor, but the congregation filled the aisles and the stranger slipped away. It seemed to Dr. Gordon that he went to the gentleman in whose pew the stranger had sat, and inquired of him:

"Can you tell me who that stranger was who sat in your pew this morning?"

In the most matter-of-course way he replied:

"Why, do you not know that man? It was Jesus of Nazareth."

I continue in Dr. Gordon's own words:

"With a sense of the keenest disappointment I said:

"My dear sir, why did you let Him go without introducing me to Him? I was so desirous to speak with Him."

And with the same nonchalant air the gentleman replied:

“‘Oh, do not be troubled. He has been here to-day, and no doubt He will come again.’

“And now there came an indescribable rush of emotion. . . . The Lord Himself, ‘whose I am and whom I serve,’ had been listening to me to-day. What was I saying? . . . In what spirit did I preach? . . . It did not seem at that moment as tho I could ever again care or have the smallest curiosity as to what men might say of preaching, or worship, or church, if I could only know that He had not been displeased, that He would not withhold His feet from coming again because He had been grieved at what he might have seen or heard.”

That dream created a crisis in the life of that man of God. The memory of it deepened all his character. The rich beneficence which flowed from his life came from a constant sense of the presence of his Lord.

Our eyes are holden that we do not know Him. In our preoccupation we forget. We are impatient, unkind, selfish, self-willed. If for a moment we could see that sad face, our self-will would change to bitter shame. The thought of what He bore and how He bore it would come upon us, and so might we learn a little sooner how to live bravely and brightly and blessedly.

Our Master is with us always: but to be conscious

of His nearness we must live in nearness to His thought and His spirit. The disciples, as they walked from the holy city to the neighboring village, were talking of Jesus, and Jesus came to them. Such companionship is within the reach of every one of us every day. Let us live as those who see Him who is invisible. The habit will grow with practise; and at length it will be our experience not merely to live as if we saw Him, but even to live, seeing Him. So shall it come to pass as it is written: "We shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is."

II

THOU HAST BEEN FAITHFUL





Courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

II

THOU HAST BEEN FAITHFUL

"Thou hast been faithful over a few things:
I will make thee ruler over many things."
Matthew, 25:21.

THE parable in which these words occur is an illustration drawn from life for the purpose of spiritual instruction. A man, setting out on a journey, confides to his servants the amount of capital which he judges each capable of using to advantage. On his return he calls for an accounting. One of the servants, coming forward, tells his master that he has so used the money given to him as to gain a profit of one hundred per cent. His master, in accordance with the rule that the faithful is worthy of a wider trust, speaks to him the words we have as the guide of our thought this evening: "Thou hast been faithful over a few things: I will make thee ruler over many things." The sentence contains a mighty principle, which holds sway in all departments of human life, the great principle that

right is in line with the determining laws of the universe, and that he who clings to the right will come out victor in the end.

There is in human nature a large measure of faithfulness. Even in our defaced and distorted likeness to the divine image there remain many lingering features of beauty and grace. In pointing out the defective in human life, in declaring that man must be transformed or be lost, there is danger of conveying the impression that Christianity is blind to the remnants of beauty which, like the stately Parthenon on the Acropolis at Athens, prove that there may be majesty even in a building which is in ruin. Much that is displayed in every-day humility calls for admiration and praise. Especially under the sun-blaze of the Christ-character, the heroic, the true, the noble, the faithful are exhibited to the praise of Him who has called us by His glory and manhood. Were it not for the worthy traits in man the appeal of the Gospel could have no entrance to human hearts.

In the year 1861, in the dead of winter, there were reported to the coast-guards of Whitby, England, seven wrecks tossing within a few miles of the harbor. Six times out went the life-boat, to bring in the crews of those wrecked vessels through the fury of the wintry storm. Once more the weary oarsmen set out for the rescue. In their breathless

exhaustion they were no match for the angry sea, and it smashed their life-boat to splinters on the harbor wall. Of the crew of fourteen, thirteen met their death.

The entire town had gathered at the harbor basin to witness the rescue, and when the shattering crash of the life-boat pierced their ears, mothers, wives, children saw their dearest dashed to death. But there was the seventh wreck, and men were on it; and soon three more wrecks were reported. What should be done? The men in that crowd were not life-guards, only fishermen and tradesmen. Were not the lives on that sea-scourged strand as precious as those doomed by the storm? The life-boat was a wreck, destroyed and unusable; but they remembered a long-discarded boat which had been stranded around the bend of the harbor. They hastened to it as it lay, drawn high up on the beach. Fourteen were needed to man that boat, which for months had been baking on the sands. The call was made to those men who had seen their townsmen done to death by the merciless sea. "Who will volunteer?" As the breakers thundered their warning on the beach before them, there stepped out of the throng of men and women—fourteen volunteers? No, seventy-four brave men offered themselves in the face of death. From this throng of heroes ready to hazard their

lives for strangers were selected the needed fourteen.

Slowly went the leaking boat over the wintry sea. Four times those stalwart men pulled from the shore, and four times came again with their human freight. Of all the crews of the ten vessels wrecked that day not one man was lost. The simple fisher-folk of Whitby had paid their full tribute of faithful heroism to the world.

It passes without challenge that one of the most difficult quests is the search for faithfulness. It is like the search for the Holy Grail. Many a person who occasionally will perform a noble act may disappoint the expectation of one who trusts him in a less important matter. Fidelity to duty is rare and precious. The man who can be left faithfully to finish his job, the woman who does not need oversight,—such persons are what employers are striving to find in every occupation in life. Rarely is the competent and faithful worker without enough to do. It is not possible to lay down a general and invariable rule, because of the multiplicity of factors affecting prosperity, health, ability of employers, introduction of new methods and machinery, and the like. Here and there and temporarily we find some faithful workers unemployed; but rarely is it the case that trustworthiness and competence do not meet with fitting appreciation and reward.

The late Dr. Wayland Hoyt tells a story of a judge who, desiring to have a rough fence built, sent for a carpenter, and said to him:

"I want this fence mended to keep out the cattle. There are some unplanned boards. Use them. It is out of sight from the house, so that you need not take time to do a neat job. I will pay you only a dollar and a half."

When the work was done and the jurist came to inspect it, he was surprised and displeased to discover that the boards had been planed and that a first-class job had been done for him. Turning to the young man, he said sharply:

"I told you that this fence was to be covered with vines. I don't care how it looks."

"I do," replied the carpenter.

"How much do you charge?"

"A dollar and a half," said the workman, beginning to gather up his tools.

"Why did you spend all that labor on the job, if not for the money?"

"For the job, sir."

"Nobody would have seen the poor work on it."

"But I should have known it was there, sir. No," he continued, refusing the offer of more, "I'll take only the dollar and a half."

He took his money and left the place. Ten years

thereafter that carpenter put in his bid for a huge contract. Among the commissioners who had the disposal of the contract was the judge who had employed him to build the fence. The decision was in the carpenter's favor, and the judge, speaking later of the incident, remarked:

"I knew that we should have only good, genuine work from him. I gave him the contract, and it made him a rich man."

He had honored himself by faithful work, and the years brought him his reward. It is not easy to maintain so high a standard. Too often in the present time the only consideration is price; excellence is passed over; and yet those who have been unwilling to lower their standard gain in the end the reward of their faithfulness. Those who are faithful in the less receive control of the large.

At the closing of the nineteenth century the prince of realistic portrait painters in France was Jules Bastien-Lepage, who was born at Damvilliers, in eastern France, on November 1, 1848. His father was a peasant proprietor, and the young Bastien was brought up to hard farm work. However, his father had the intelligence to recognize his son's genius, and he encouraged him in the development of his art. When the day's work was finished, the father set his son to draw whatever happened to be on the

table. Later the boy enjoyed a school course, which demonstrated his artistic powers, and his parents obtained for him a position in the post-office department in Paris, hoping that he might employ his spare time in the art school.

While thus engaged in public service, young Bastien perceived that his progress in art was retarded by the divided interest, and he had the courage to resign his position and to enter the atelier of Cabanel in 1868. Two years later the Salon accepted "The Young Architect," a picture from his brush; but in the same year came on the war with Germany, and he was sent to the front as a sharpshooter. In his absence a shell crashed into his studio and destroyed a recently completed picture, representing a nymph bathing her feet in a stream. On the same day the young painter was struck by a clod of earth flung wide by a shell, and for the next two years he was an invalid in his father's house.

In 1872 he was again in Paris, supporting himself by anything that would bring money—painting fans, shop signs and the like. One day a dealer in perfumes engaged him to paint a picture to advertise his goods. In response Bastien put upon the canvas his best work. It was a representation of the Fountain of Perpetual Youth bubbling up in a meadow where youths and maidens were coming together to drink

of the source of life and beauty. So pleased was the artist with his work that he asked the perfumer to permit him to exhibit it at the Salon. The dealer was willing, if Bastien would paint the name of the perfume and the dealer on a scroll at the top of the picture. The young painter was almost starving. Two years before his picture at the Salon had failed to win a prize. But to make an advertisement of a work of art was to his artistic soul utterly revolting. He refused, and his customer declined to accept the picture. The hungry artist bravely carried his picture to the Salon. It was accepted. It caught the fancy of the public, and orders began to pour in upon the courageous young man. Loyalty to his profession won a speedy reward.

During a visit to France made some years ago it was our good fortune to enter the museum of Joan of Arc in Orleans, the city whose famous siege was raised by that devoted heroine. The city shows its gratitude by many memorials. In the upper story of that collection are gathered copies of all the pictures in France, painted to set forth her dreams and achievements. The young woman in charge showed herself intelligent concerning everything connected with the Maid of Domremy, and rattled on so enthusiastically in her musical French that one of the party, observing her interest and information, said:

“There is one picture of Jeanne D’Arc, which is not in France.”

The eager look on the bright young face changed to regret as she replied:

“It is by Bastien-Lepage. The French offered silver for it, and the Americans offered gold: and the American gold procured it.”

A copy of that picture, entitled, “Joan of Arc Listening to the Voices,” feebly expressing the genius of the canvas which hangs in the Metropolitan Museum in New York City, appears at the beginning of this chapter. We see her wandering amid the dreamy shadows of that humble garden, transfused by celestial light. The tree by which she stands and the building behind her exist to-day for the pleasure of the tourist. Her form resembles that of the peasant girls in the region of Domremy and the face is composite, drawn, the upper part from the face of a young girl of Domremy, and the lower part from a child neighbor. The figure of Michael, the conquering archangel, symbol of the unyielding faithfulness to which Heaven awards eternal diadems, is seen, with hints of attendant angels, above and behind the dreamer, as that which is visible, not to the outer, but to the inner vision. Bastien’s home was not far from Domremy, which was quite familiar to him, and he painted with sympathetic fervor the

maid whose faithfulness to her ideals, strong even to death, sways the heart of France to-day. It was fitting that she should be portrayed by one whose faithfulness to his ideals won him the fame which made possible for him the true artist-life which should speak its message to both sides of the sea.

If such be the outcome of faithfulness to art, we may suppose that faithfulness to the higher laws of the universe would not pass unrewarded. Too little has been made in the past of the reward which the faithful receive in the refinement and invigoration of character derived from right decisions operating in the individual life. The man who, by the observance of the laws of health, by the use of proper food and sufficient exercise, maintains a healthy body has his reward in himself. He does not look to the State to award him a gold medal: he does not expect Congress to vote him a princely pension. His reward is health. He finds it in the pain-free body whose action and repose are unbroken delight. So, likewise, the man who, by pure and noble living, by true and lofty thinking, establishes a habit of righteousness has his reward in an excellent character. Why should he be looking for some external reward? He finds his reward in the full satisfaction which such living imparts, and that to him is all-sufficient. But we should not think that Heaven is niggardly toward its faith-

ful disciples. The command is, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things"—that is, all things needful to our well-being—"shall be added unto you."

It is related that a prominent Philadelphia merchant one Saturday ordered all his clerks to come the next day to his wharf to help in unloading a newly arrived vessel. One young man came to him and said:

"I am sorry, but I can't work on Sundays."

"You know our rules," said the employer.

"Yes, I know. I have a mother to support, but I can't work on Sundays."

"Well, then, step to the desk and the cashier will settle with you."

That young man had taken a stand for God: and the world might say that God had not stood by him. He went out, brave in the thought that it was not his battle, nor his responsibility; and he busied himself at once to find other employment. For three weeks he wandered about without success, three dreary weeks, as hard a test to his faith as it would be to yours. One day a banker came into the merchant's office to ask if he could recommend a man for cashier in a bank that was forming. The millionaire at once mentioned the name of the discharged young man.

"But," said the banker, looking at him in surprise, "you dismissed him."

"Yes, because he would not work on Sunday. A man who would lose his place for the sake of his conscience would make a trustworthy cashier." Thus was it that God stood by the young man who took a stand for Him. If men were more willing to trust, they would find that Heaven is entirely competent to care for its faithful servants. Those who respectfully, decently, without defiance, without bravado, not for the sake of making themselves conspicuous, but because they feel that they can not do otherwise in lowly honor to their Lord,—those who have stood quietly and stedfastly for the Lord Christ can testify that they have been blessed both in their own souls and in their worldly estate.

Too often, however, men think that the protest and stand for righteousness ought to be sufficient to make up for lack of diligence, intelligence, ability, courtesy,—faithfulness in some other respect to the principles which are highest. Such Christians often meet with disappointment and have their faith shaken because their faithfulness is fragmentary, and the sharpness of bitter experience is needed to spur them to a more complete devotion to duty.

With most persons lack of faithfulness is not occasioned by lack of ability. There are strength of

will and endurance of body and breadth of intelligence sufficient to the desired outcome. Many are those who are diligent in their business, but lax and unfaithful in the divine service. Frequently it is not so much the outcome of viciousness as of thoughtlessness; but thoughtlessness in a degree is vicious, and the effect is evil on character, and character is the man. Every one of us should be impressed with the conviction that devotion to the Master's work ought to equal the devotion to any other occupation in all the world. When the political party or the military company or the lodge or the trade or profession or business or the claims of society,—when any of these comes before the service of the Master in the Christian's thought and activity, the result is defective faithfulness and incomplete devotion and unsymmetrical character.

A pure life is not always easy. The thought of to-day is directed toward pleasure. The prevailing question is, How can we have a good time? Selfishly looking out for a good time is not the way to have the best time. The keenest pleasures are obtained by faithfulness and kindliness, by doing the right because it is the right, because God calls us to do it.

On the monument to Abraham Lincoln in Springfield is the simple epitaph, "He was faithful," the grandest inscription ever engraven on a hero's tomb.

Not easy was the earning of it. There were dark days and sleepless nights, criticism, abuse, threatenings, plots, and assassination; but he strode stoutly and truly through all to the end, and his faithfulness commanded the homage of nations far scattered on both sides of the sea. Moreover, in his own soul he had a profound satisfaction that the work he was doing was the work of God, and that it was prevailing to the preservation of the nation and the deliverance of the slave.

God may not call you to lead a nation, but He does call you to faithfulness in the sphere where you move, among those to whom your life may be bane or blessing. It is a test of the virtue and value within you, whether you are the real thing, to use a current term. Do you question whether it be worth while? It is exactly that, here and hereafter. It will give you the truest and fullest pleasure now, and a gladness which words can not speak, when the service is finished. Some day you will acknowledge the truth of this principle of life. Shall it be with bitter regret or with joyous possession? Try it, my friend, fling into it all the brave determination of your manhood, and all the wealth of that land of glory will be unlocked for you, when the Master shall come at the sun-setting to say: "Thou hast been faithful. Enter into the joy of thy Lord."

The Church of Christ is engaged in a mighty undertaking, the salvation of the world. The stake is stupendous. It is humanity that is in peril. Were the Christian truly awake to the horror of the shipwreck of a single human soul, his whole life would be given to rescue work. The bottom fact is that he does not believe there is any such crisis. He sets the thought aside. Can it be that the godless man into whose eyes he has looked, whose hand he has clasped, with whom he has jested, who has glanced up from his desk time and again with that engaging smile—can it be that that attractive companion is drifting on to eternal perdition? There must be some way to save him. Somehow, the Christian thinks, God will see to that. 1295645

But, friends, God has seen to that. He has provided a Sacrifice at infinite cost. He has charged you with the task of winning that man to eternal life; and are you standing idle and letting him stride onward to plunge off the end of the plank into perdition? Will it always content you to think that you left it to God to do the whole of it?

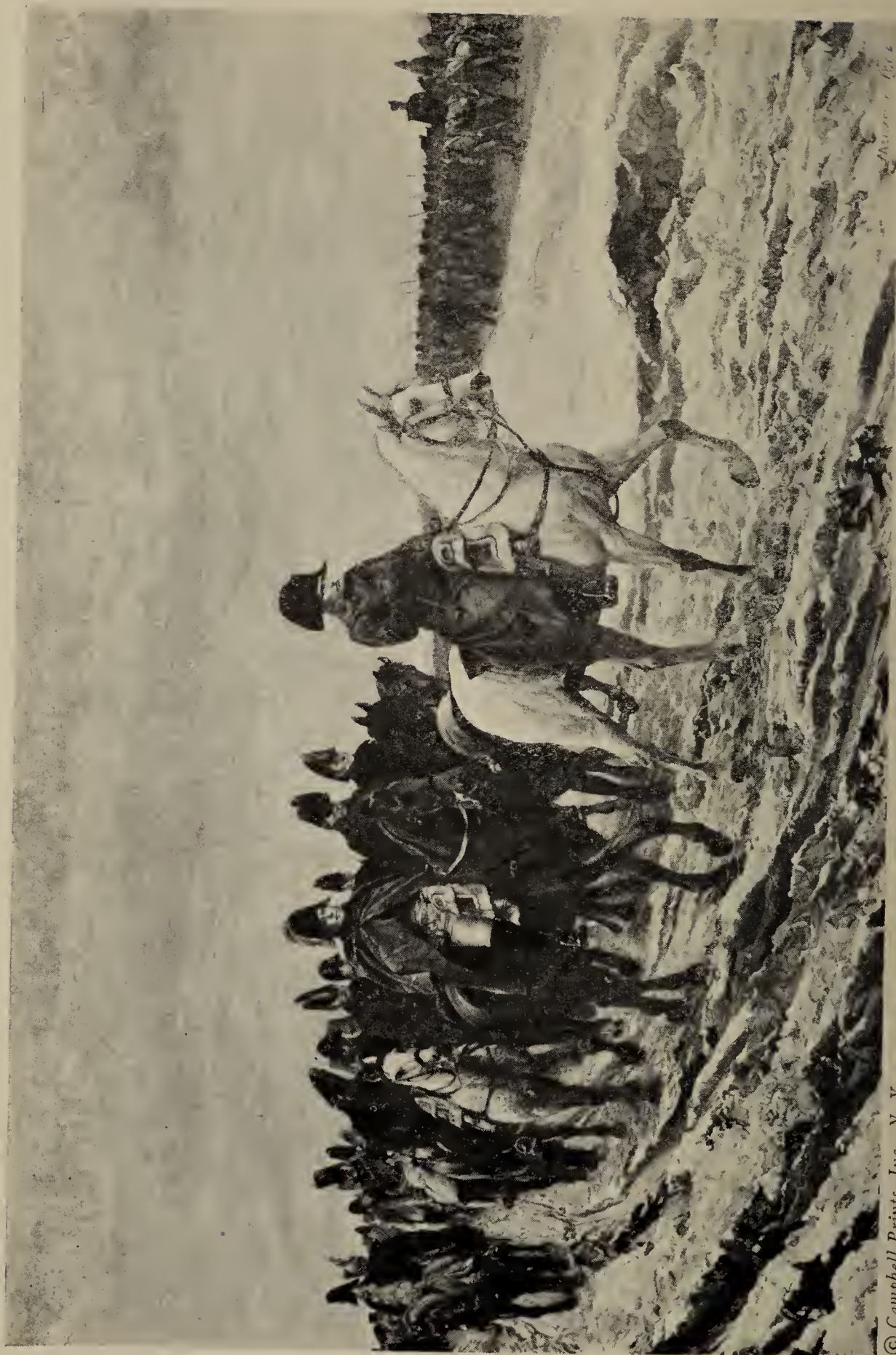
The mighty steamer *Titanic*, one of the two greatest vessels ever launched from a shipyard, styled "unsinkable," was plowing the ice-strewn sea one night in April, 1912. Suddenly word went out over the air to all shipping, "Come, quick! We

have struck an iceberg." Four hours later the "unsinkable" went down beneath the icy waves. But they had been hours of marvelous human courage and self-repression. The women and children were placed first in the life-boats—every boat had been filled to the limit—but sixteen hundred persons remained to go down with the doomed leviathan.

The captain of the *Titanic*, according to the stern code of the sea, went down with his vessel; but another captain was aboard who came out with the survivors. Exactly a year after the disaster, that veteran seaman passed into the unseen world, and the last words on his lips were these: "We must get them all into the life-boats." That had been the central thought in his mind as the huge *Titanic* sank slowly into the sea. The intensity of it dominated his thoughts as once more he came to the bound of life, this time to pass beyond.

Such is the slogan which should sway each Christian life—faithfulness to that great cause of human salvage to which the Great Martyr gave His life. It is a world that is sinking to destruction. Shall not every faithful disciple say: "We must get them all into the life-boats?" What shall be your account of your faithfulness to that Christlike motto in the great day when you shall stand before your King?

III
WORKING FROM THE SOUL



III

WORKING FROM THE SOUL

“Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily,
as to the Lord, and not unto men.”
Colossians, 3:23.

WHATEVER attitude men assume toward the Church, whatever they may say concerning the professing Christian; one thing they are compelled to admit, and that is that the maxims of Christianity, strictly applied to our daily life, would produce a perfect society. Sometimes, in these days, we hear men contending that no man can obey the commands of our Lord and yet succeed in business. The controversy bids fair to be a long one. The fallacy of the statement may be proved by the many instances of those who have conducted their business with honesty and with kindliness, and yet have achieved distinguished success.

Christianity is nothing at all, if it is not to be put in practise throughout the whole range of a man's life. Many are those who apply certain of its pre-

cepts in their business or in some phase of their life, finding it to advantage to do so; but they are not wise enough to extend their invitation to all of its precepts. The admonition which we consider this evening has to do with the whole round of our daily activity. The apostle urges his converts to do everything with earnestness, as those who are serving the God of Heaven, and not merely the men about them. In the margin of the Westminster Revision we notice that "heartily" is translated "from the soul." "Whatever ye do, do it from the soul." Such has been the method of all successful work in the past. No matter what may be the department of labor we investigate, we find that those who are prosperous are those who are diligent.

Most persons give very little thought to the labor connected with the making of any effective work of art. In the department of painting, novices are impressed with the difficulty of execution, and have some awe of the man who is able to handle colors in such a manner as to make a flat surface stand out in relief. But the details of work in connection with any great painting are ordinarily hidden in the artist's studio, and remain unknown to the vast majority. Those who know something more of the method of working, are aware that the most successful men decline to paint from the imagination,

and endeavor as much as possible to have the very thing before them when they put their brush to canvas.

The distinguished Frenchman, Meissonier, whose great canvases on the life of Napoleon are accepted as classical by the highest critics, was most exacting in his demand that the very thing to be painted should be before him. After Meissonier's death, in a sketch of the artist's life, his son gave an account of his method in painting the picture of Napoleon entitled "The Campaign of France, or 1814." Most Americans speak of it as "The Retreat from Russia," but the Russian campaign was two years earlier, and this picture presents Napoleon marching toward Paris after the failure at Laon, March 9th, 1814, his fame departed, the dread of him passed away. The picture shows the Emperor, returning at the head of his staff over broken ground partly covered by snow and torn up by the passing of wagons. The junior Meissonier wrote:

"At last the snow fell. When it had covered the ground, my father set to work. He had the earth trampled down by his servants, and broken up by the passing to and fro of heavy carts. When the track had become sufficiently muddy, my father started working in the open air; and notwithstanding the bitterly cold weather, he placed his models on horse-

back. Then with prodigious activity he hurried on all the study of details in order to have them finished before a thaw set in. After the escort of generals, Napoleon's figure was his next work. My father tried on the costume. The coat fitted him like a glove, the hat seemed made for him. He did not hesitate a moment, but at once took the model's place on the white horse that had been sent from the imperial stables, caused a mirror to be placed before him, and hastily set to work to copy his own outline and the background before which it was set. The cold was intense. My father's feet froze in the iron stirrups, and we were obliged to place foot-warmers under them, and put near him a chafing-dish over which he occasionally held his hands."

To many persons that would seem like taking a great deal of pains; but it was work of that sort which established his fame and enabled him to sell his canvases for \$60,000 apiece.

As it is with the work of the artist, so is it with work in any department of activity. Those who desire to get much out of anything must put much into it.

In my young manhood I asked of my tailor:

"How long an apprenticeship did you serve?"

"Seven years. That was the rule in Germany; and after his apprenticeship a young journeyman was

expected to get about in the world to make him more proficient."

"Was it necessary?"

"It made a man a master in his business. Let me take four measurements, and I can fit you with a suit of clothes."

When the present elaborate measurements are occasionally made for me, frequently I have questioned whether we have advanced so greatly on the skill of that tailor, who required only four measurements to insure a fit.

What the world wants is thoroughness. Those who give it are the most likely to succeed in marketing their product. A manufacturer in the Middle States, when asked to give the secret of his prosperity, replied:

"We always try to surpass our last output."

In order to do the very best work, one must understand the business thoroughly. He must do it with his soul; and that means an acquaintance with everything that bears on the business and affects the excellence of the work. It is remarkable how many are willing to go through the world, knowing merely the part of the business directly connected with their individual work. A great many of the discouraged people of to-day might even yet achieve something at present beyond their hope, if only they would

make themselves masters of the business in which they are engaged.

A Christian young man, a young man of good character and high aspirations, who had lost courage, came for advice to a practical leader of men. He wanted to study, and raise himself in the world. He had been a weaver for six years, and he understood his own task thoroughly. His friend asked him what he wanted to study, but he was at a loss in what direction to turn. His friend inquired:

“Do you know how to weave?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Could you fix your loom, if it broke down?”

“Oh, no! The loom-fixer does that.”

“Do you know about the yarn which passes through your loom?”

“Oh, no! that is done in the yarn department.”

“Did you ever think to study chemistry as it pertains to dyeing the yarn in your loom?”

“No, sir.”

“Did the harmony of colors ever occur to you?”

“No, sir.”

“Well, then, go and study your own business, and you will find interest.”

To the same practical thinker came a young brick-layer who complained:

"I have to work very hard, and I am not making much headway in life."

"Do you know the bricklaying business?" inquired his friend.

"Yes, sir."

"Could you do all sorts of labor in brick work, such as laying fine pressed-brick fronts and turning groined arches?"

"No, sir; I never did any of that kind of work."

"Do you understand drawings?"

"No, sir."

"Could you estimate on a mammoth brick building, if you were invited to do so?"

"No, sir."

"Do you know how to make bricks?"

"No, sir."

"Do you know the composition of clays in various bricks?"

"No, sir."

"Do you understand about the chemical effect of fire on clay?"

"No, sir."

"Did you ever study geology to find out about clay?"

"No, sir."

"Well, how can you say that you know the brick

business? and why have you lost interest in it? You have learned only the A, B, C's of the art. You have only paddled along the shore. Go out and let down your net, and study the origin, development, and future of the brick business, and its relation to nature and to the comfort of mankind; and then come and tell me whether your lot is hard, and whether you have lost interest in your business."

Christianity is sanctified common sense. These two young men did faithfully what they did. So far as it went, it was from the soul; but they had larger capacity than they were employing; and therefore it was not from the whole soul that they were working. Their dissatisfaction was proof that they were capable of broader and higher things. A study of their own business would tend to make them better workmen in their special tasks, and possibly fit them for higher tasks, whereby they might become of more benefit morally and spiritually to the world.

Some years ago Senator Depew visited the mechanical department of Cornell University. At the head of it he found Professor Morris, who at once saluted him as his superior officer, saying that he had formerly been engaged on the New York Central Railroad.

"How did you get here?" asked Mr. Depew. To which the professor replied:

"I fired on the New York Central; then I stood

on the footboard as an engineer. While a locomotive engineer, I made up my mind to get an education. I studied at night and fitted myself for Union College, running all the time with my locomotive. I procured books and attended as far as possible the lectures and recitations. I kept up with my class. On the day of graduation I left my locomotive, washed up, put on the gown and cap, delivered my thesis, and received my diploma. Then I put away my diploma, put the cap and gown in the closet, put on my working shirt, got on my engine, and made my usual run."

By such work he fitted himself for a place of higher usefulness, and so it occurred that he was called to the mechanical department of Cornell as a professor in that university.

It is a matter of prime importance that the Christian should expend his energy on the business to which he is suited. We are not all made alike. Each has his special capabilities. There are few persons in the world who are capable of being successful in more than one or two departments of activity. It is not merely in our selfish interest that we should be wise in choosing the department for our special study. It is our duty to be careful, and to use the best judgment attainable, that our lives may not be wasted,

and that the blessing which we may bring to the world may not be lessened.

The inventor who stands, it is said, second to Thomas A. Edison in the number of useful devices entered in the United States Patent Office is Ethan I. Dodds, the originator of 1,800 patents, the associate of George Westinghouse, of E. H. Harriman, of Robert T. Lincoln. When he was a boy, he contrived an arrangement by which his mother, while knitting, could rock in her chair and by the motion of the rocker do part of the kitchen work. He entered the Westinghouse works at eighteen, and at once began to advance in mechanical engineering, gaining an important position before he knew how to read.

Naturally, such an enterprising young man had a college record. He once confessed to an interviewer that he was not a graduate of any university, the truth being that the extent of his studies covered the entire length of one week. At the close of that period, in which he had done his best to acquire a liberal education, the President of the little college sent for him and asked him to be so kind as to go away.

"We can not do anything for you, Dodds," said the baffled educator; "you are wasting your time, and ours."

It seemed cruelly unsympathetic; but it threw young Dodds back on the sort of work for which he was fitted. It was the kindest treatment possible, for it set him on the road to success. It is all but certain that this prince among inventors never would have amounted to anything as a classical scholar. The breaking was the making of him.

It seemed like a misfortune, but it was in truth a blessing; and to any one of us a similar disappointment might occur, if we embarked on an enterprise for which we were mentally unfit. It is of the highest importance that we should endeavor to discover the task for which we are best fitted; and, in doing this, the Christian who is living near to his Master will seek by prayer the guidance of Him who knows us through and through.

Another principle connected with the hearty doing of our work is that we should do it in the best spirit. We may not like the business in which we are. The fact that we are in it gives us special opportunity for discovering all the unpleasant features, all the difficulties and losses connected with the occupation. If we had nothing of which to complain and nothing to overcome, others would soon discover the fact and the business would soon be overcrowded. Then we should have trouble enough. We may not like the business; but it is our duty to make the best of

the business, and, while we are in it, handle it to the best of our ability. Even from the view of selfish common-sense we should recognize the law that the man who does best in his present business has the best chance of getting into something better. The sterling principle of the follower of Christ induces him to do his best cheerfully for Christ's sake.

A young man employed in the drafting-room of the Great Western Railway, in England, noticed that the men were occasionally sent down the line on responsible commissions. Ordinarily they took a day preparing to start. Thinking how great was the waste of time, he filled a bag with traveling necessities, and kept it in the office, so that he might start at short notice. The young men about him laughed at the notion; but one day the chief engineer came in and asked about the bag. The young man said:

"I determined, if I had a chance to go, I'd be ready."

"You did? Do you see that train?"

"Yes, sir."

"Can you catch it?"

"I think I could."

"Jump in. I will telegraph instructions."

The young man was down the line and in the place where they wanted him to be when the instructions

were received. No one who knew him was surprised when at length he became one of England's most eminent lawyers. The world can always make use of the man who fits himself brightly and cheerfully and thoughtfully for the best kind of work in his own department.

It is throwing the soul into the work, using all the faculties one possesses, which makes a man useful beyond others in whatever occupation he may be engaged. It is a study not merely of what others may say of it in books or special periodicals; it is such an attention to the conduct of the business as enables one to perceive what the mere time-server misses, it is such a doing from the soul as relieves others and makes the Christian's presence a delight and a profit.

Some years ago a young man was acting as clerk and general helper in a subordinate position with a firm which was engaged in trade with Spanish-speaking countries. After he had been in the business a little while, he noticed that when the Spanish consignment came in, the senior partner took the letters and was kept busy for two or three nights, checking goods and answering the correspondence. This partner was the only man in the house who knew Spanish, and all that extra work must fall on him. The young man took his determination at once, and set himself

to learn Spanish, especially as related to that business. A few months afterward he astonished the senior partner by saying one day:

"Let me have the invoices of your Spanish consignment, sir, and I will attend to them."

"Do you know Spanish?" said the head of the firm, looking at him with interest.

"A little, sir."

"When did you learn it?"

"Just recently."

"Well, young man, you astonish me. You are the only clerk in this store for thirty years who has had the grit and gumption to do anything extra; so that, if you can do the work for me, you shall have it always."

So that young man leaped into a position of responsibility and trust, simply because he was working from his soul. Now, some one may say that this is good business advice, but has very little to do with religion. If that be your notion of religion, my friend, you have yet to learn what the religion of the Lord Jesus enjoins. It has been the stumbling-block of the world in all the past that some professing Christians lay off their religion when they enter their places of business. It is the duty of the pulpit to teach honesty, faithfulness, alacrity, cheerfulness, thoughtfulness, attentiveness, intelligence, and en-

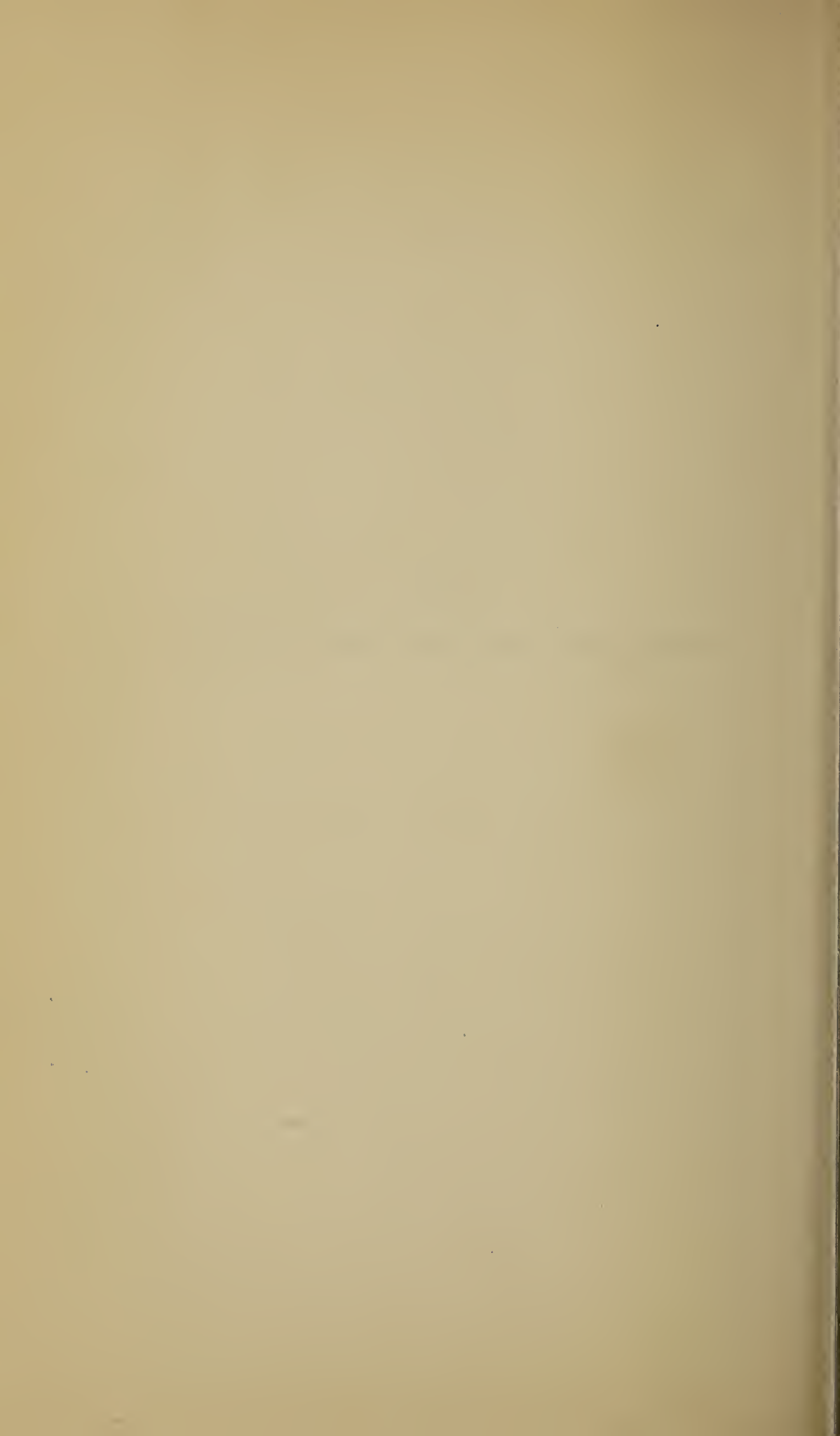
ergy in business. Whatsoever ye do, do it from the soul, as unto the Lord.

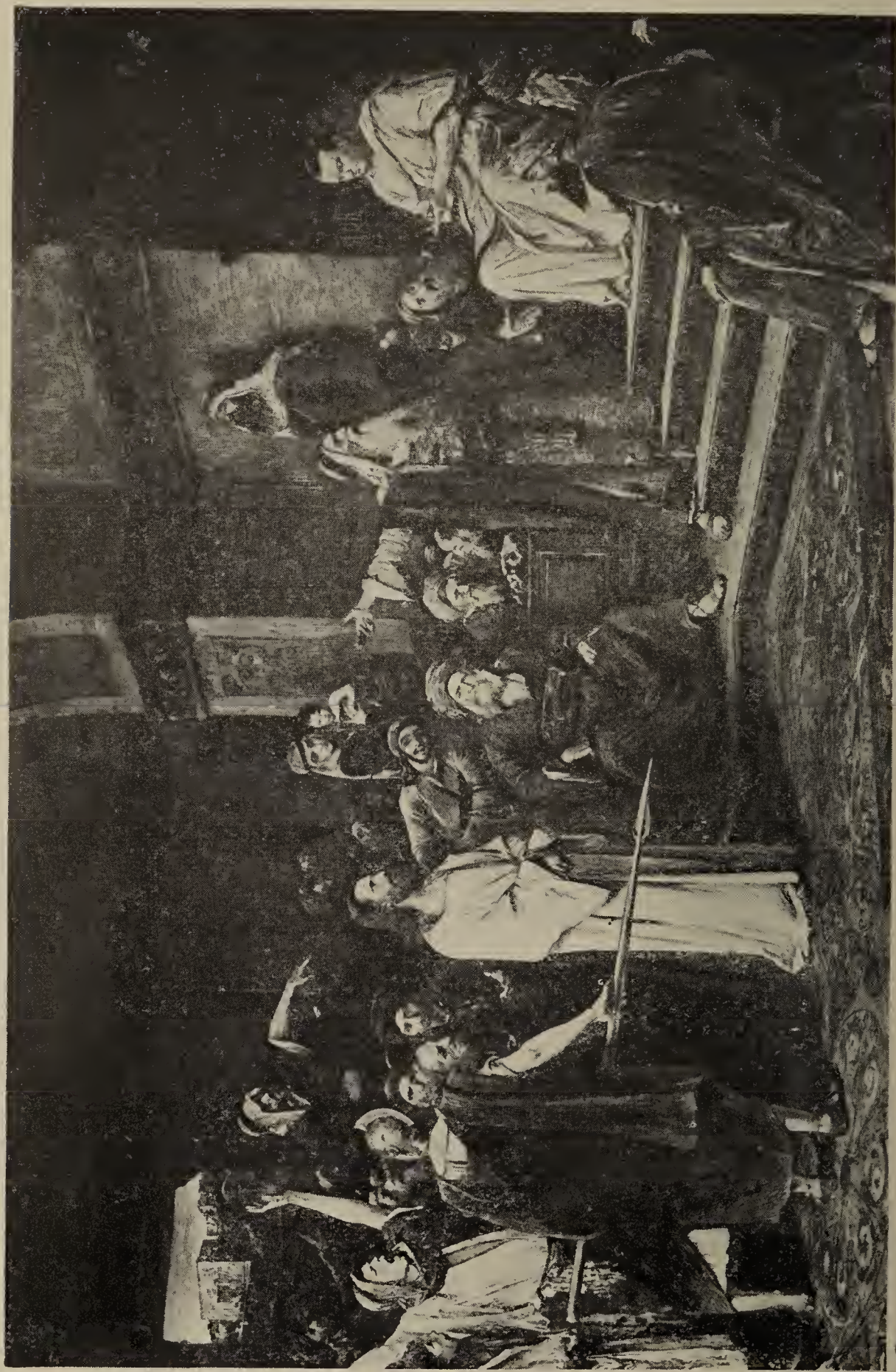
The Christian must carry his religion into his business, for that is part of his life; and Christianity has to do with the whole life. He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much. If, therefore, ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? What we do, we should do well. The Master of the house cometh, and he who hath been faithful over a few things, shall be made ruler over many things. He shall enter into the joy of his Lord.



IV

THE LURE OF THE SON OF MAN





IV

THE LURE OF THE SON OF MAN

“A sinner stood beside Him, weeping.”
Luke, 7:37.

OUR Lord was making one of His evangelistic circuits through Galilee. He had paused at the gate of Nain, to restore to a mother her only son, whose funeral procession He had met. He had spoken His message of repentance, and He had uttered that most tender of invitations: “Come unto Me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” In some place, we know not where, perhaps Capernaum, after He had addressed the people, He was invited to the house of a Pharisee who bore the exceedingly common name, Simon; and there He reclined with the others at the family table. It appears from the narrative that the host had not accorded Him the special honor of washing His feet, nor yet was that office performed by one of the servants. That courtesy was not an invariable

one, and it might be omitted without slight, especially if the guest had not come in from a journey.

We may assume, therefore, that the Pharisee had deemed his invitation a sufficient honor of itself. He was showing favor to a strolling rabbi. He was by no means convinced that he was entertaining a prophet. The Jews of that day, you will recollect, reclined at table, the couch running around three sides of the board, which formed three sides of a square, the fourth side being left open to permit the servants to serve the guests from within, somewhat after the manner of the lunch-counters found in some railway stations. The family and the guests reclined with their heads toward the table, supporting themselves on the left elbow, so having the right arm free to reach and carry the food to the mouth.

The meal was in progress: the conversation in full course, the servants moving in and out with busy attentiveness. To the house and into the room, how admitted we do not know, came a woman of that city, known for her sinful life. The gracious invitation to the weary had not fallen on heedless ears. One heavy-laden heart welcomed the invitation, and was drawn in reverent emotion to the sinner's Friend. He had brought a new purpose into her life, and in the fervor of her revolutionary resolve she came to offer Him the highest act of homage within her

power. She passed silently behind the guests, and paused at the Saviour's feet. The depth of her sinfulness and the tender love which had won her heart came afresh upon her mind, and the quick, irrepressible tears fell upon the feet over which she was bending. She had not thought of anything like that, and she was wholly unprepared; but, as she bowed in penitence, she remembered her long hair, and, uncoiling it, she dried His feet, that she might apply the ointment. Then, taking the vessel which held it, she poured the ointment over His feet, and, bowing low, kissed them in the passion of her thankfulness.

Her movements attracted the attention of the host, who reflected indignantly upon the incident. His house was dishonored by the presence of this woman; and, if his Guest were truly a prophet, how could He be ignorant of the character of the creature bowing at His feet? In the Pharisee's eyes Jesus was disgraced, His mission discredited, His doctrine made void. With the incomparable insight which marked all His dealings with men, our Lord made the proud, self-satisfied man himself expound the situation by drawing from him his comments on the parable of the two debtors, both released from obligation, but the one owing ten times as much as the other. By a very easy inference, which Simon hardly needed to have explained to him, the contrast was drawn

between the elegant, self-righteous host and the despised woman, in the measure of love shown to the Messenger of Heaven's King.

Thus we perceive displayed in vivid contrast in this incident in our Saviour's life two classes of sinning human beings: the confident, complacent sinner and the convicted sinner. Of the two, the penitent, oppressed soul shows in the better light. There is little gain in coming near to Christ unless the character of the person be affected by the character of Christ. Herod was near to Christ; but he remained the same elegant, regal roué that he had been. Caiaphas was near to Christ; but the encounter was of no value in renovating his life. Judas was near to Christ; but the baseness of his evil character-growth is only the more revolting. The error of all these men was that they blindly justified themselves in the course which they chose. They were self-contented, complacent sinners; and they thought themselves secure in the prosecution of their monumental fallacy.

The blunder is repeated as stupidly and dangerously to-day. Many are the imitators of those old-time spiritual failures. The Gospel is proclaimed and known far more widely and clearly than in those days. The condemnation of to-day is as much greater than theirs as the condemnation of Capernaum was

greater than that of Sodom. The art of justifying wrong-doing has become a fine art to-day. The acumen of the schoolmen, who are reputed to have discussed how many angels could stand on the point of a needle, finds in the modern man a fit successor. Men have been performing over and over that juggling trick by which they have been blindfolding conscience and hoping to cheat the Deity and so enter by Heaven's back door.

The short, incisive sermon of Nathan to David, "Thou art the man," never was popular. How could it be? It is not surprising that any one should stay away from that kind of preaching. The only wonder is that men ever come to hear it. Some years ago there lived in Japan a Christian woman who was a hairdresser. In her faithfulness she employed her popularity among the ladies of rank whom she served, to tell them the story of the Cross, and so win them to the Saviour. After some conversations with the little hairdresser, a woman of distinguished position determined to unite with the Christian Church. But one day as the little woman was oiling and twining the dark glossy locks of the noble lady, she spoke of her customer as a sinner. The noblewoman turned upon her with flashing indignation. "What!" said she, "I, a Samurai's wife, a sinner! Why! I have never sinned in my life." From that hour she scorn-

fully withdrew from all association with the people of Christ.

It is amazing to what a degree the mind of many persons is blinded to their own sinfulness. Multitudes are undisturbed by their own failure to meet the demands of the moral law. They justify themselves in the life they are leading. Until some sudden danger of exposure bursts upon them, they are entirely unconcerned. It is one of the reprehensible characteristics of the American spirit, altogether too prevalent in society, that the individual considers himself justified in setting aside the public law whenever it is inconvenient for him to observe it. Very many persons apply the same rule in the realm of moral law, creating for themselves a system of excuses or exceptions which are assumed to relieve them from conformity to the declared will of God.

In the twenties of the present century a woman in somewhat mannish garb, arriving at the port of New York, presented her declaration of dutiable articles to a customs inspector. He made the usual examination and permitted her to go to the Biltmore Hotel, which she gave as her address. After her departure, recollection of something in her manner aroused the suspicions of the inspector, and he determined to question her further.

The woman, who was about middle age, resented his searching queries and said indignantly:

"I guess you don't know who you're talking to when you insinuate that I am dishonest."

But the inspector was not to be so easily convinced or turned aside from his duty; and he insisted on her return to the pier to be examined by the official inspectress. Knowing well what was before her, she made some futile attempts to impress the official with her innocence and ward off an inspection; but at the pier her bravado collapsed, and she yielded unwillingly to the examination, which revealed that in addition to a number of small pieces of jewelry, estimated as worth about \$5,000, she had on her person two diamond rings valued at \$10,000 each.

She had thought to deceive the officers of the law, and she was very bold and at her ease so long as the matter went smoothly; but when her fears were aroused by official probing, she betrayed her guilt by bluster; and when the evidence of her crime was discovered, she stood an alarmed and sullen law-breaker expecting and fearing punishment.

Thinking that their fellow men know nothing of their inward life, multitudes face calmly the men and women of their acquaintance; multitudes can maintain a nervous, unsatisfactory grasp on the throat of conscience; multitudes keep up a persuaded or

half-persuaded sense of right-living by looking much at their own good acts and much at the sins of their neighbors. In their hearts' depth there is discontent, there is a consciousness of wrong, which some day will make them cowards. The saddest of possible conditions in the human soul is that of the person who knows the whole story of the love of God, and who yet does not want to be rescued by that love. What keeps the many from the house of God more than anything else in these days is not the doubt of a welcome nor the monotony of religious service nor the exclusiveness of rented pews; but simply unwillingness to be reached. It is not indifference to religious things, but what is very much more, it is repugnance toward religion. What keeps men and women out of the Church of Christ is this: They do not want to be made holy.

A San Francisco newspaper printed some time ago an item telling of a young man in that city, who took to task a lady of zealous foreign missionary activity, rallying her on her interest in "barbarians ten thousand miles away."

"Why don't you look after us wild young men at home?" demanded he.

"I should like to reach you young men in this city, and do you good," said the Christian woman; "but I am unable to bring you into our churches and win

you to the Saviour. We appeal to you, we try to throw good influences around you, we invite you to our homes and to our churches; but you refuse our invitations, and go off to your theaters and balls and clubs and fast company."

"Well," rejoined the young man, "I will show you how to reach us young men. You need not spend your energies on the heathen; you can save us young men when I show you how to do it."

On his next visit to his club, that young man told the boys about this kind, motherly, earnest woman, and her desire to do good to them if they would only give her a chance. They listened to his proposal more or less seriously, smoked and drank, and talked it all over. Quite deliberately they came to the conclusion that "they did not want to be reached."

When it comes to rock-bottom, that exactly defines the condition of many who attend church for the social or esthetic attractions which it presents. It is something appalling that so many men and women do not want to be reached by the salvation that is in Christ. They want to sip the poisonous pleasures of life; some of them want to drink deep. They lose the best that is in life, and they hazard the peril of a final indifference to the holiness which Christ offers. Herod and Caiaphas and Simon the Pharisee and Judas Iscariot did not want to be reached. It is for

every one of us in this house to consider whether we are placing ourselves in the class with them.

Men have written of the wonders of God's working in nature, men have grandly traced His regnant hand in the history of the nations; but more than all the marvels of wisdom, of power, of immensity, glows in splendor the amazement of the patience of His enduring love. How He holds back disaster from the daring; how He pours benediction upon the defiant; how He whispers His persuasion to the wilful; how He waits until we are weary to offer once more His rest! When we have refused the best, still He pleads with us to take what remains, what still is possible to us; to snatch the beauty of the waning day. How He waits in pity to bring blessing to the wayward children of His love, who in their ignorance have wandered from the way! It was the thought of that long-suffering loving-heartedness, which bowed in penitent weeping that sinning woman who stooped to anoint the blessed feet which had trod so weary a way to find His sheep.

My brother, if for once you could understand the deep sorrow of your heavenly Father for all your misunderstandings, for all the mistakes you are making, for all the hurt you have suffered in your failure to accept His fatherliness; if only you could be made to know how great is the sacrifice He has

made and how great the patience He is exercising even now; your view of your life and of the life of the world would be revolutionized, and you would hold out your hands to Him with a deep, swelling emotion of love.

Many have been the attempts to present pictorially the tragic moment when the Saviour of men stood accused before the Roman governor in Jerusalem; but none has entered more profoundly into the mind of the lonely Man of Sorrows, none has more powerfully presented that stupendous hesitation and that majestic yearning, than the Hungarian painter, Michael Munkacsy, who was born in Munkacs in 1844 and died in the last year of the century. His first noted picture, "The Last Day of a Condemned Man," is in a private collection in Philadelphia. Three of his pictures, "The Pawnbroker's Shop," "The Music Room," and "The Two Families," are to be seen in the Metropolitan Museum in New York City. The Academy of Fine Arts in Philadelphia possesses "The Prowlers of the Night." The Walters Gallery in Baltimore contains one of his smaller pictures, "The Story of the Battle." In 1881 he produced his masterpiece, "Christ Before Pilate," which was purchased by Mr. John Wanamaker, and exhibited in Europe and in this country. When it was shown in New York City, the veteran missionary,

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Dr. William Butler, visited the church where it hung. I give you his own account of what occurred at that time. Dr. Butler wrote:

“When I was about to leave, three gentlemen who had just entered, came up close behind me. They evidently had dined luxuriously, as the odor of champagne intimated, and were somewhat rollicking in manner. They stood, and were at once attracted by the picture, on which the light was resting, and removed their hats as they saw the others had done. After a few moments one of them came up to me and remarked:

“‘Say, I think I’ll go up nearer and get a better view of that affair there, shall I?’ as if asking for my opinion or leave.

“‘Yes, friend,’ I replied, speaking in a kindly, sympathetic tone, ‘do so: for the nearer you can get to Jesus, the better it will be for you.’ He stared at me, and asked:

“‘Do you really think so, Colonel?’ I became interested in him and answered:

“‘Oh, yes, I am very sure of it. The nearer the better, and it will be equally so in eternity. Even there the nearer you get to Jesus the better will it be forever with you.’ He paused, then glancing at the picture again, sobriety seemed to return to him, as with a puzzled glance at me he remarked:

“ ‘Why do you say so, Judge?’ ”

“ ‘Because I feel satisfied it will be so. I know it is so now, and do not doubt it will be so forever.’ ”

“His whole soul seemed to be arrested by the thought, and, looking at me again very earnestly, he asked:

“ ‘Why, who are you?’ No title was added this time. The frolicsome manner had left him. The man was earnest and sober now.

“I answered his question by saying, ‘Oh, never mind about that’; and, lifting my eyes to the picture, I quietly replied, saying:

“ ‘I have been a humble follower of His for over forty-eight years, and I know Him well.’ ”

“ ‘You do?’ he asked, astonished.

“ ‘Yes, I do. He accepted me lovingly when I came to Him, and He has been with me ever since. He would just as willingly and lovingly receive you, if you would only go to Him, for “He receiveth sinners,” and is “the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world.” ’ ”

“The man’s whole soul was attracted, and, drawing a deep sigh, as the tears rushed to his eyes, he said with much feeling:

“ ‘Oh, sir, you don’t know what a sinner I have been. How could He receive me, a poor wretch like me?’ ”

“‘Why, friend, you are just the man He wants to come to Him.’

“‘What, I?’

“‘Yes, you,—even you; for “He came to seek and to save the lost,” and declared from the fulness of that compassionate heart of His, “Him that cometh unto Me, I will in no wise cast out.” O man, go to Him, go to Him at once.’

“While I uttered the words, I felt that they were reaching his heart, and his hand had gone out to my side to grasp my hand, as he put his mouth near to my ear, and with deep feeling exclaimed, ‘Oh, pray for me, pray for me!’ ”

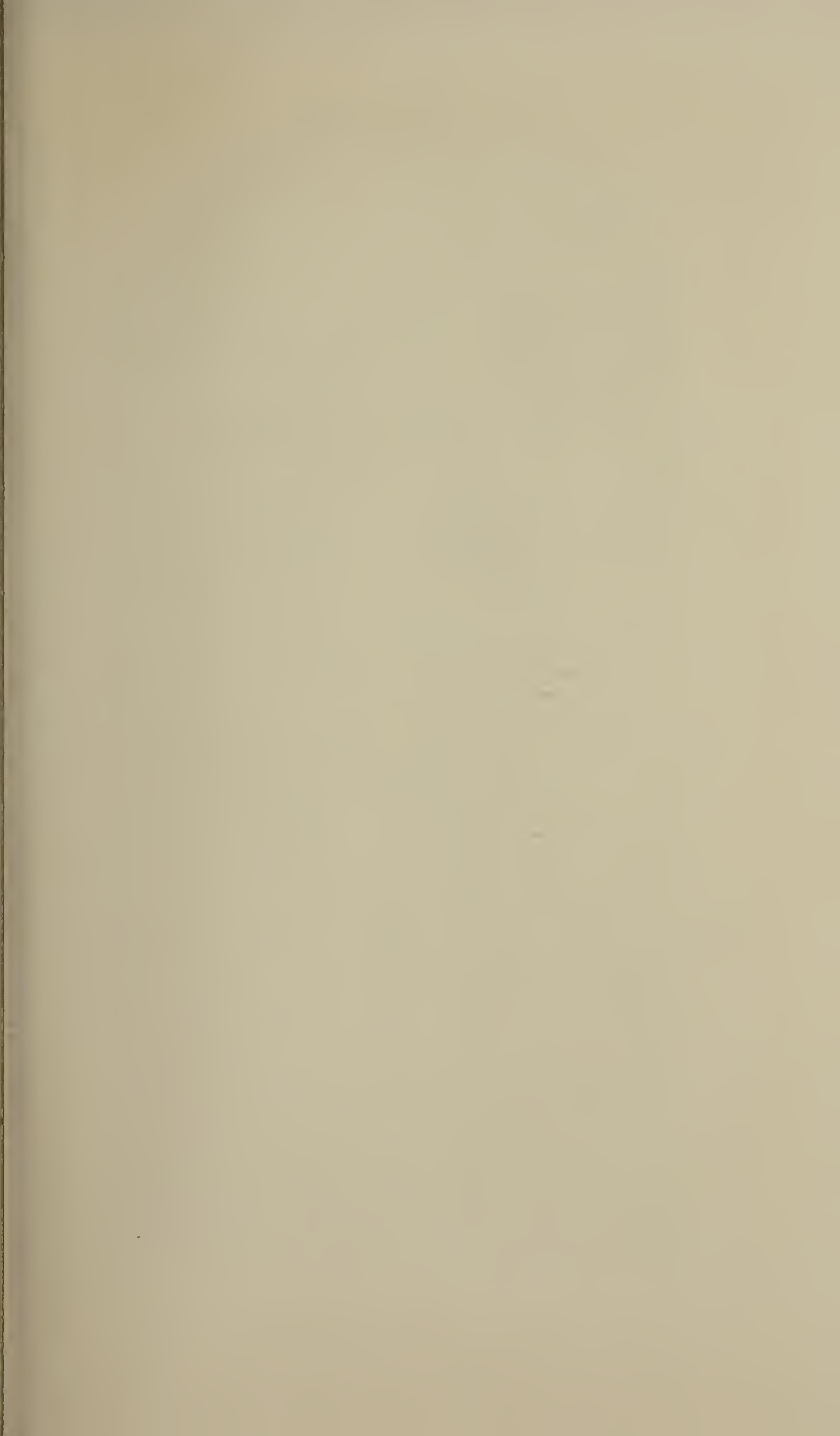
Would that the little copy of that work of genius might speak to each soul here to-night, that such a vision of the suffering Saviour might appeal to every heart. Better for time and eternity, far better is it for everyone who comes near to Him with consciousness of sin and desire to be saved from sin. He is as ready to say to whoever in this room will draw near to Him, as He was to say to that sinner long ago: “Thy sins are forgiven thee. Thy faith hath saved thee, go in peace.” He is longing to rescue you, to put strength into you, to enable you to live for an eternity of glorious beauty. Come nearer to Him. Come this very hour.

V

BEHOLD, I STAND AT THE DOOR

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THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD—*Holman Hunt*

V

BEHOLD, I STAND AT THE DOOR

“Behold, I stand at
the door and knock.”
Revelation, 3:20.

IT is proof of the limitless wisdom of God that His word of truth presents its teaching to man in the form of a picture, a parable, a biography. The truth is thus brought to man's mind in a manner easily comprehended. By no other method could spiritual teaching have been communicated with equal accuracy to every age of the world, to every degree of intelligence, to every stage of human life. The Scripture pictures and parables comprise teachings the most terrible and the most tender, illustrations of the love of God for sinners, of Christ seeking the lost, of the sacrifice of the Saviour to redeem mankind, and of the final reward of those who follow and of those who ignore the teachings of the Messiah.

In early Christian art we find reproductions of these pictorial teachings, beginning with the use of

symbols: the ship denoting life, the lamb representing Christ, and the like. Then come drawings more or less rude, presenting more extended subjects, leading up at length to the highest effort and attainment of the painter's art. Nor have we reason to suppose that man has reached as yet the possible, or even the probable, summit of achievement. The present age has not been without its substantial additions to sacred art. The present generation has been instructed by religious portraiture in many gradations from the rugged realism of Munkacsy to the delicate devotion of Holman Hunt.

It is to the evangelistic labors of this English artist that your attention is invited this evening. There was a time in the Church when the expression, evangelistic singing, required explanation to the larger part of Christendom. It was virtually unknown in Great Britain prior to the first visit of the evangelists, Messrs. Moody and Sankey. Evangelistic art is as yet an unused expression which we may introduce to the Church to-night, and which may become usefully current in the coming years.

William Holman Hunt was born in 1827, and died in 1910 in the city of London. His father was too poor to give him even an ordinary education. He was apprenticed to an auctioneer, but in the intervals of his business he found time for the vocation to

which God had called him: for the voice which called Holman Hunt to paint for God was as unmistakably divine as the call of any pulpit orator to the proclamation of the Gospel.

As soon as he was released from his apprenticeship, the young man began the long struggle which ended in his entrance into the Royal Society of British Artists and to the favor of the public. Shortly after 1850 he went to Palestine, purposing to have the true East before him as he painted. From that time he may be said to have used his brush in preaching to the world. His picture, "The Hireling Shepherd," was exhibited in 1852, "The Awakened Conscience" and "The Light of the World" in 1854. That dreary, pathetic figure of desertion and exclusion, "The Scapegoat," wandering exhausted in the desolate mountains by the Dead Sea, was given to the world in 1856. Then he worked for four years to produce the one picture, "The Discovery of Christ in the Temple," and gave it to the world in 1860; and then came what was perhaps his greatest financial success, "The Shadow of the Cross," a canvas which brought the sum of \$50,000. It represents the Saviour as a young carpenter, weary with the work of the day, His arms extended to rest His muscles from the heavy toil. His shadow is thrown by the setting sun against the framework behind Him, and, lo! one sees

there the figure of a cross and His form extended upon it. Mary is looking upward in a strange wonder at the ominous coincidence so prophetic of His awful destiny.

In 1878 came "The Triumph of the Innocents," portraying the night of the flight into Egypt, the Holy Child in His mother's arms, riding away to safety, surrounded by the thronging spirits of the slaughtered innocents, His guard of honor through the lonely night. His last great picture was "Christ Among the Doctors," finished in 1890, a marvel of study and of accuracy, truer than any other to the life and spirit of the East.

The greatest of all his pictures is "The Light of the World," which Ruskin honored with an extended interpretation in the book, "Modern Painters," saying of it: "Hunt's 'Light of the World' is, I believe, the most perfect instance of expressional purpose with technical power, which the world has yet produced."

When the picture was exhibited for the first time on the walls of the Royal Academy in London, Mr. Ruskin wrote to *The Times* that few were looking at it, and those who did so had a contemptuous expression on their faces, because it seemed to them absurd that the Light of the World should be going about with a lantern in His hand. Their criticism merely showed their ignorance, and the critic wrote

to explain the artist to his spectators. This is his interpretation:

“The legend beneath it is the beautiful verse, ‘Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me.’ On the left-hand side of the picture is seen this door of the human soul. It is fast barred; its bars and nails are rusty; it is knitted and bound to its stanchions by creeping tendrils of ivy, showing that it has never been opened. A bat hovers about it; its threshold is overgrown with brambles, nettles, and fruitless corn—the wild grass ‘whereof the mower filleth not his hand, nor he that bindeth the sheaves his bosom.’ Christ approaches it in the night-time—Christ in His everlasting offices of prophet, priest, and king. He wears the white robe, representing the power of the Spirit upon Him: the jeweled robe and breast-plate, representing the sacerdotal investiture: the rayed crown of gold, inwoven with the crown of thorns; not dead thorns, but now bearing soft leaves for the healing of the nations.

“Now, when Christ enters any human heart, He bears with Him a twofold light: first, the light of conscience, which displays past sin, and afterward the light of peace, the hope of salvation. The lantern carried in Christ’s left hand is this light of con-

science. Its fire is red and fierce; it falls only on the closed door, on the weeds which encumber it, and on an apple shaken from one of the trees of the orchard, thus marking that the awakening of conscience is not merely to committed, but to hereditary guilt.

“The light is suspended by a chain, wrapt about the wrist of the figure, showing that the light which reveals sin appears to the sinner also to chain the hand of Christ.

“The light which proceeds from the head of the figure, on the contrary, is that of the hope of salvation; it springs from the crown of thorns, and, tho itself sad, subdued, and full of softness, is yet so powerful that it entirely melts into the glow of it the forms of the leaves and the boughs, which it crosses, showing that every earthly object must be hidden by this light, where its sphere extends.”

In his determination to discover a symbolic meaning in every detail of this remarkably thoughtful picture, Ruskin missed saying to the world what Holman Hunt himself would have said, which is that it was the purpose of the Pre-Raphaelites to employ the symbols of the simple days before titles were inscribed on picture-frames and before people could read them—the symbols which introduced each individual to the onlookers. So, as St. Catherine was

always known by her wheel and St. Sebastian by his arrows and St. Jerome by his lion and St. Barbara by her tower, so Christ who is the Light of the world should be known by His lantern and by His crown of thorns, which things prove that the figure is no other king, and that it is with no other purpose than to bring the light of conviction and of peace, that the Saviour comes and knocks.

Fellow-sinner, how great is the tenderness of this picture which the painter-preacher would bring before your eyes! He has all the affairs of earth and of Heaven dependent on Him, that patient King, and yet He will count it worth His heed to come to the door of your heart and knock for admittance there. Your name has gone but a little distance from home. The great world has never heard of you, cares not at all for your sorrows and your successes. In another generation who will read of what has filled your whole life of turmoil? Large as your interests are to yourself, and, it may be, to a circle of friends, how little do they affect the thought or occupy the time of this city! None the less the Hand which sways this mighty universe is knocking at the door of your heart this night, waiting for your answer. Are you giving Him the slightest heed? He comes with blessing for you, if you will but have it. All things are His; and, receiving Him, you receive

all things with Him; and yet you keep Him standing, Him the Lord of All!

Before that picture in which Holman Hunt strove to express the mystery of human indifference and the might of heavenly tenderness, once stood the author of "Uncle Tom's Cabin." The pathos of the picture, the inexpressible grandeur of it, moved her mightily, until there came from her pen a poem of rare beauty which will long be associated in many minds with the lesson which poet and painter alike struggle to convey. It begins with the questioning of the soul within that house, hearing the knocking in restless slumber, and closes with wondering inquiry as to the issue of that lordly condescension and amazing patience. Keep before your thought the picture and the situation which the picture involves, and the poem will become luminous to your imagination.

" 'Knocking, knocking, ever knocking;
Who is there?'

'Tis a Pilgrim, strange and kingly,
Never such was seen before;
Ah! sweet soul, for such a Wonder,
Undo the door.

" 'No, the door is hard to open,
Hinges rusty, latch is broken;
Bid Him go.
Wherefore with that knocking dreary

Scare the sleep from one so weary?
Say Him, No!’

“ ‘Knocking, knocking, ever knocking;
What, still there?’

O sweet soul, but once behold Him,
With the glory-crownèd hair.
And those eyes so strange and tender
Waiting there:

Open, open, once behold Him—
Him so fair.

“ ‘Oh, that door! why wilt thou vex me,
Coming ever to perplex me?
For the key is stiff and rusty,
And the bolt is clogged and dusty;
Many-fingered ivy vine
Seals it fast with twist and twine;
Weeds of years and years before
Choke the passage to that door.’

“ ‘Knocking, knocking! What, still knocking?
He still there?
What’s the hour? The night is waning,
In my heart a drear complaining
And a sad unrest!
Ah! this knocking! It disturbs me—
Scares my sleep with dreams unblest.
Rest—ah, rest.’

“ ‘Rest, dear soul, He longs to give thee;
Thou hast only dreamed of pleasure—
Dreamed of gifts and golden treasure—

Dreamed of jewels in thy keeping;
 Open to thy soul's one Lover,
 And thy night of dreams is over.
 The true gifts He brings, have seeming
 More than all thy faded dreaming.

“Did she open? Doth she? Will she?
 So as wondering we behold
 Grows the picture to a sign,
 Pressed upon your soul and mine;
 For in every breast that liveth
 Is that strange, mysterious door;
 Tho forsaken and betangled,
 Folly-gnarled and weed-bejangled,
 Dusty, rusty, and forgotten;
 There the piercèd hand still knocketh,
 And with ever patient watching,
 With the sad eyes true and tender,
 With the glory-crownèd hair—
 Still a God is waiting there.”

Brothers, this is not all a picture. It is real. The door closed, the patient knock, the Prince of Glory. Real, and here, now. How often have you heard it; and has the door been opened? Why is your heart so determined to exclude the King who comes to bless? Are you so encumbered by riches that you can afford to shut Him out? And you have earnestly desired at times the riches that He offers. You have found yourself strong to shut the door, but it is the

strength of the man who pushes from him the surgeon when bright blood is gushing from the open wound. Yes, you are strong to refuse life; would that you were strong and wise to accept it. Brother, your life-blood is flowing fast. The quick ebb, the stilled pulse, that also will come one day; and One stands at your door, saying: "He that liveth and believeth in Me, shall never die." None the less you do not let Him in. He stands patient. Never will He force an entrance. But the messenger who does not wait to knock, strides swiftly toward that doorway. He stays not to knock: he breaks in. No message of tenderness that,—grim, silent sternness. No offer of life bears he. He is Death. I do not ask you to let him in. He will not ask your permission. Whenever sent, he enters. Still that patient Christ is waiting, waiting through the years until now, waiting through this evening's service, knocking, knocking at your door. Do you still keep Him waiting?

In the picturesque hill-country of New Jersey, in the quiet parish where I began my ministry, in an ancient brick parsonage, since then demolished, was born Arthur Cleveland Coxe in the early part of the last century. The son of a famous Presbyterian divine, by his own ability he became himself known to the world, in 1865 being raised to a bishopric in the Protestant Episcopal Church. He, also, was arrested

by the tender and solemn thought of this picture: and he too busied his pen to lay before us its instruction. Deeply sober is the teaching which impressed itself upon him. May it flow from him to us.

Men have caviled at the teaching of Paul; men have turned from the doctrine of James; and men have caught at part of the instruction of John, declaring that he alone presents their conception of God. "God is love"—such is the thought that the man of to-day delights to repeat. He lifts it between himself and every warning that earnest spirits urge upon him. "God is love," and that love is displayed in Jesus Christ our Lord, who taught John all the love that he ever learned. All the love that man could desire, and more than he could ever have hoped for, appears in that marvelous life of self-abnegation. Is it not love amazing that He should die for us? Could we expect that He would come to us to persuade us to accept the benefits of His death?

The picture which we have been considering this evening is overflowing with love, yet it also possesses a somber sadness that might well touch the hardest heart. The sadness lies in the fact that the Saviour of men never becomes the Saviour of some men. They keep Him standing without. So comes it that when no longer waiting is of any avail, the Love that suffered and waited, at length turns

from the door; and the weeds grow on untrodden, and the vines climb and cling and weave their network firm and fast. So then at last desolation settles down upon the life that refused Him, and in agony the soul pleads, not for the entrance of the Light of the World, not that, but for some sordid gladness, some relief from the tyranny of its own remorse; no possibility of joy or even of relief remains; and the sad voice which once called unheeded, answers:—"I never knew you; depart from Me." God is love, and those are the words of God. Such is the teaching of that picture of love given us by the lips of the Saviour Himself. As we sing the hymn written by Bishop Coxe, let the picture still rise before us, and may we remember that our own selves have a part in it. It is at our heart's door that He is standing.

"In the silent midnight watches,
 List—thy bosom door!
 How it knocketh, knocketh, knocketh,
 Knocketh evermore!
 Say not 'tis thy pulses beating:
 'Tis thy heart of sin;
 'Tis thy Saviour knocks, and crieth:
 'Rise, and let Me in.'

"Death comes down with reckless footstep,
 To the hall and hut;

Think you, death will stand a-knocking
 Where the door is shut?
 Jesus waiteth, waiteth, waiteth;
 But thy door is fast!
 Grieved, away thy Saviour goeth:
 Death breaks in at last.

“Then ’tis thine to stand entreating
 Christ to let thee in;
 At the gate of Heaven beating,
 Wailing for thy sin.
 Nay, alas! thou foolish virgin,
 Hast thou then forgot?
 Jesus waited long to know thee,
 But He knows thee not.”

Is the thought too terrible? Friend, if it be too terrible to think of, why is it not too terrible to do? Why are you doing it, my friend out of Christ? There is nothing in the mere passage from this world of the seen to the world of the unseen,—nothing to scare the soul, nothing whatever, unless we go into the presence of One whom to-day we avoid. Our Lowell says: “The grave’s real chill is feeling life was wasted.”

Once it seemed to me that Bishop Coxe blundered in writing:

“Jesus waited long to know thee,
 But He knows thee not.”

In one hymn-book it reads:

“Now He knows thee not.”

But that is not what the author meant. His thought was not that there is set a time after which Christ will not accept and know those who have refused Him. Not that. The thought is this: The Saviour comes to the heart's door that He may obtain our friendship. If we decline to admit Him, we refuse to let Him know us; we have shut out from us all the knowledge which He would bring to us, the knowledge of eternal life. So at last, if any one have declined to let the Saviour enter, he will find himself incapable of enjoying the pleasures of Paradise for which the friendship of Christ would have fitted him. Now after many days man comes, not wanting, nor even willing to accept the friendship, merely in passionate haste to escape from the anguish of remorse. He asks what can not be achieved even by omnipotence.

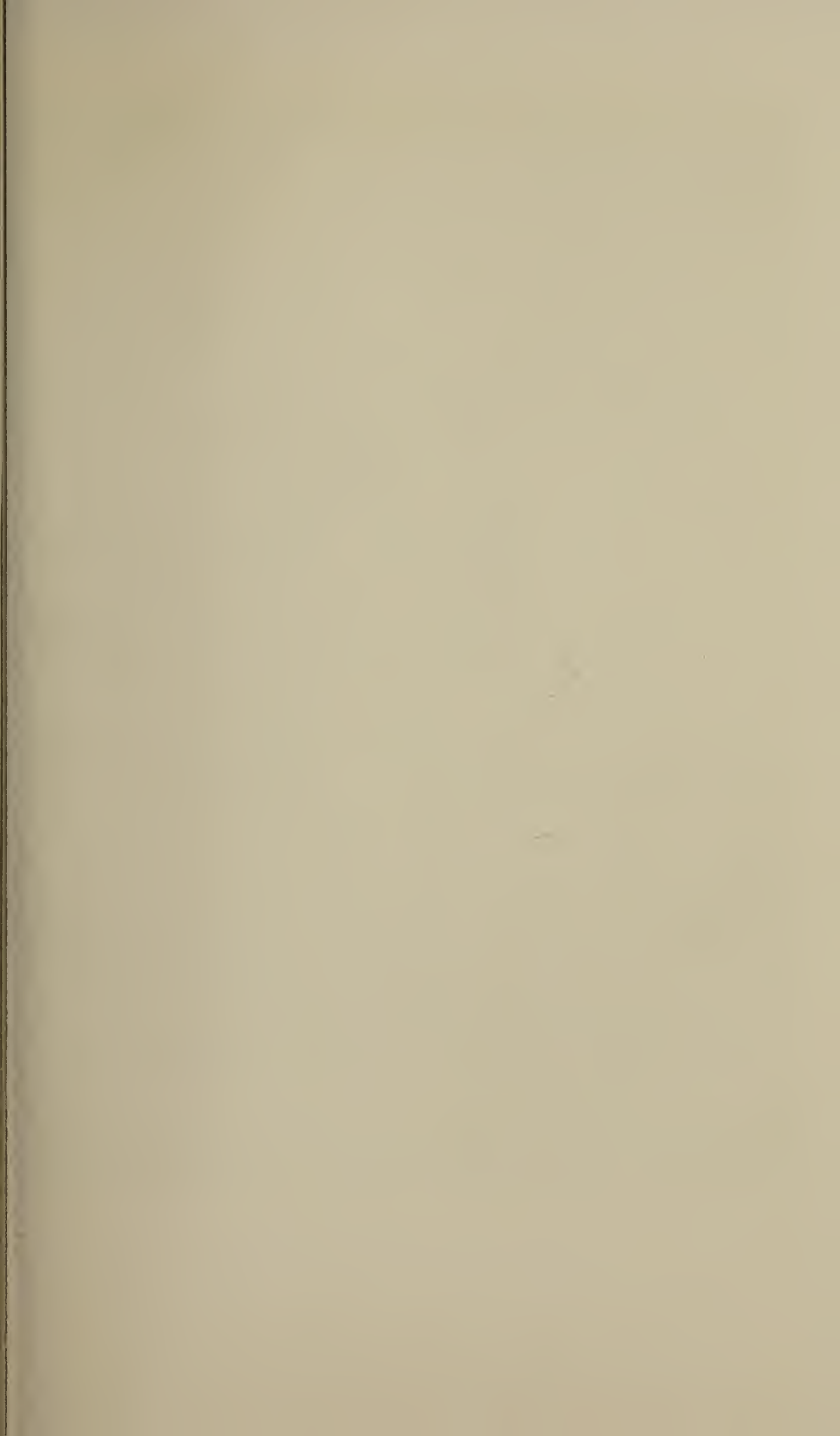
If we might change the illustration, we might say that at length man finds the house of his soul a torture-chamber; and, beating at the door now habit-bound, he finds that he has shut himself in to despair. Once he might have opened his heart to Christ; now his strength is insufficient to undo the barrier so securely barred. Brother, as you would some time enter the doorway of Paradise, open to-day the door

of your heart to Him who waits without. No man ever enters Heaven unless Heaven first enters him. If you would have Heaven, let Heaven in. The gates of the New Jerusalem are never closed, and yet there shall enter naught that defileth. If you desire to enter into the Home of the Son of God, you must let Him enter the home of your heart.

Still He waits and knocks; knocks by the coming of sickness, knocks by the coming of death, knocks by the voice of His servant, knocks by the censure of conscience, knocks by the loss of possessions, knocks by the loss of faith, knocks by the shocking words of the scoffer, knocks by the chill contact of a dead soul. Friend, tempt not His kingly patience. Not forever is it possible that you can open. This night He waits in the majesty of love. Still He is knocking. Let Him in.

VI

THE HEART'S REFUGE





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CHRIST, THE CONSOLER—*Plockhorst*

VI

THE HEART'S REFUGE

"If any man thirst, let him
come unto Me and drink."
John, 7:37.

THE average young American is not tired, and is not discouraged. He is not specially interested in sermons addressed to the disheartened and the hopeless. Whether with business or with pleasure, his life is full, and he expects to push his plans and to succeed with them. So is it that he has no time for the thought of failure.

Nevertheless, preparation for doing what must necessarily be done, what is called vocational education, training for some special kind of work, appeals to the average American mind as good common sense. Americans will study for years to fit themselves to be lawyers or chemists or electricians. That kind of preparation they do not leave until the last minute, expecting somehow to jump into competency in no time. Those who wish to succeed, busy themselves

with the task of preparation. Americans place a high value on education.

However, in religious matters, Americans are characteristically improvident. This may be partly the outcome of certain features of American life. Life in this land presents opportunity for pleasure and luxury such as nowhere else exists. Even should a man become bankrupt, he expects to live and to work his way again to ease. Americans are proverbial for their fondness for taking risks in all their enterprises. Combined with the wealth of our natural resources, this faculty for risk-taking accounts for the amazing advance in our national wealth. This risk-incurring character is shown in the way Americans treat health. As a people we do not begin to take care of our health until about the time it is departing. So many learn too late, when there remains no longer any possibility of retrieving the damage. When this risk-taking is practised in the department of religion, the outcome is most sad.

Not long ago I read of a man who was out of a situation. In the course of a conversation with a Christian woman he made the remark that he had been wondering whether God could help a man to a place, and that he had a notion to ask God to help him. What did she think about it? The Christian replied by asking:

"How does one generally begin an acquaintance? Do you start right off to ask a favor of a man the first time you see him? Wouldn't it be a better plan to win his friendship first? By what you say I shouldn't think that you knew God well enough to ask a favor of Him."

"That's so," responded her questioner. "I hadn't thought of that. I guess I had better begin by making God's acquaintance."

It was a simple, unconventional way of talking the matter over; but, if any one will give a little thought to the question, he will acknowledge to himself that the proper way to prepare for asking help of God would be to make His acquaintance. When one asks a favor of an entire stranger, he runs no little risk of meeting with refusal. God has told us that He will not turn away those who come to Him, but He has also clearly indicated that some may come to him when it is too late. There isn't anything new in the ways of the Kingdom of Heaven. This matter of becoming acquainted with God is a very old notion. Eliphaz, the Temanite, said to his friend Job: "Acquaint now thyself with Him and be at peace: thereby good shall come unto thee." It were well for all men to think of that.

That young person has had a heedless, unintelligent life, who has not at some time felt a weariness

and disgust of the unsatisfying nature of earthly triumphs and achievements. It is something which increases as we become better able to weigh the worth of life. One of the most brilliant of all the Englishmen who ever visited the land of Persia, Henry Martin, the missionary, as a young man achieved distinguished honors at the University of Cambridge. Before he had reached the age of twenty he attained to the highest mathematical honor, that of Senior Wrangler. It was a proud moment for any young man so to triumph in a contest with the picked intellects of England; but in describing his emotions he wrote:

“I obtained my highest wishes, but was surprized to find that I had grasped a shadow.”

Those who seize the true meaning of existence, have such a disappointment more than once in life. To the more reflective it brings the conviction that man needs something more in this world than mere earthly honors or acquisitions can give him. A very wholesome disgust sometimes comes over the young man or woman, even in the midst of all that the world desires. It is all bright and fascinating: but it is not satisfying. The nobler spirit feels that it is not enough. He is thirsty for something lasting, something which shall reach to the depths of his

existence and give him satisfaction. In that moment the Lord Christ speaks to him and says:

“If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink.”

But in addition to the shadowy character of all earthly achievement there is the uncertainty of all earthly things. There is great comfort in the presence of a friend in a time of suspense or of apprehension, and at such a time there is an irksomeness and nervous unrest in the presence of a stranger. If the Lord Christ is to be a value to us in the time of pressure and strain, we must be acquainted with Him beforehand.

Where is there a man in these days who knows that his position is secure? That his business can not sustain any loss? That his health can not fail? I knew a man in charge of an important branch of the American News Company, who once told me that he had received word that at the end of that week his services would no longer be required. A friend of mine who by years of application to business had become the sole owner of a profitable oil refinery, once told me that he was undersold by the Standard Oil Company until one day he turned the key of his office for the last time, and went away a ruined man at the age of forty-eight. Under the existing con-

ditions of business in this country I know of few men, if any, who may not suddenly be deprived of what is making life bright and joyous. There is no position in life which is not incident to disaster.

Is there one in this room to-night who is assured that his health will be perfect one year from this day? Is there one who can be sure that his dear ones will all be about him a month from this date? Is there one who can say that he will not be in need of comfort within the next few weeks? Now is the rational and accepted time for making the acquaintance with God, which shall give confidence to approach Him in the day when we may long for His helping hand, for His sustaining arm.

How dazed are those who have not a sustaining arm to lean upon, when calamity comes upon them. I well remember the puzzled manner of a young man whose mother had died, as in speaking of her death he said: "We don't understand it. It seems so strange in our family." Death had never been near him before, and he had no Saviour upon whom to lean, and the world seemed to have lost its stability. Everything was in a whirl about him, and his heart was bruised and desolate. He had not become acquainted with God, and he was dumbly groping amid the shadows without a comforter.

In various ways the art-masters of all lands have

presented to us the Christ in His character as the Consoler of the weary and heavy-laden. Ordinarily they do so in connection with some incident of His life; but sometimes the more thoughtful present Him in some allegorical or symbolic fashion which teaches truth with greater force because of the originality of the presentation. One of the most suggestive canvases dealing with our subject is from the brush of a German, born at Brunswick in 1825, Bernhardt Plockhorst. The young artist studied lithography and drawing at Berlin and Dresden. In the year 1850 he studied painting at Munich under the brilliant colorist, Piloty; and in 1851 at Paris under Couture. Later he visited the Low Countries and Italy, spending much time in Venice. From 1865 to 1870 he taught as professor of art in the school at Weimar. In 1879 he made his home in Berlin. Lofty conception, distinguished truthfulness and depth of expression, with a masterly technique, have set him in the forefront as a colorist.

In the gallery at Cologne may be seen his "Contest between the Archangel Michael and Satan over the Body of Moses," which occupied him for five years in its production. It is a striking picture, representing the dead law-giver with rays of glory issuing from his brows, borne by angels and guarded by the

Archangel, who hovers over him with beautiful wings outspread, protecting with his shield the form of the prophet, while he repulses with flaming sword the arch-fiend who advances from the gloom of the background. Another canvas of striking beauty is entitled "Mary and John Returning from the Tomb," a work which is markedly superior in delicacy of composition to most of the canvases treating the same subject.

Among his more recent works are "The Entry into Jerusalem" and "The Walk to Emmaus," given to the world respectively in 1892 and 1895.

The painting which engages our thought to-day represents the Saviour seated before a Roman archway, receiving and comforting a young pilgrim who has come in discouragement and penitence, longing to lay down his head on a kindly breast in his disappointment and gloom. We know that he is a pilgrim by his garb, his hat, and his staff. He has made some effort toward self-control. He has advanced somewhat along the road to the celestial city; he has made a brave fight of it, but the day of defeat has come, and he hastens away from the world to hide the passionate violence of his pent-up grief. He has an acquaintance with the strength and patience of the loving Saviour, and he finds just what he seeks, a quiet voice to still the throbbing of his brain

and a sympathetic hand to lift him up and lead him on to victory.

In the rosy atmosphere shot through with heavenly light, which hovers over the Saviour's head, the artist has painted two cherubs, so-called conventional figures, each consisting of a head supported by wings, symbolizing swiftness and intelligence. By them he would remind us that the angelic host is profoundly interested in the welfare of the children of God, that they are leaning forward to look into the mystery of the incarnation and sacrifice of the Son of God, that those entrusted with the care of children have ever immediate audience before the Throne, that the host of light rejoices whenever the wanderer is brought home and the sinner turns from his sin.

You have the picture before you, the weary form, the bloodless face, the tired lips, the trembling hands; you have the pure, true, tender countenance of the Man of Sorrows, now almighty for the rescue to the uttermost of those who come unto God by Him. But the young man is a pilgrim, he is not a stranger to this Saviour. He does not feel that he has any right to come; he only knows how patient the Saviour has been with him.

Young people are not thinking of failure; if they did, the world would never go forward. We look to them for the advance of the world in the next

twenty-five years. But, as was repeated so often awhile ago, It is better to be safe than sorry. Safety first! Young people have always wanted to try things for themselves. Adventure appeals to them. They want to know for themselves. How commonplace and cheap it all is! How silly and babyish it sounds to the wise, how terrible to the penitent man and woman who would give the world to wipe out the memories that burn, the sights and sounds which can not be shut out from the tortured mind!

No matter what you have placed before you of selfish indulgence, the more adventurous it is the more dangerous, the more brilliant the more bitter. Moreover, it is all very flat, not smart at all, only disgustingly unoriginal, a poor copy at best of what has been done, and common to prosiness.

In a Parisian restaurant a tourist was sitting at a table when his attention was arrested by a conversation in a language other than French, a language ordinarily quite safe under the conditions. A young fellow was telling his French tutor of a romance in which himself was the chief character, a narrative of a spiciness such as he thought would make it fit to become the plot in a brilliant modern novel. At the close of the tale, the Parisian pushed away his plate in languid boredom as he said: "My young friend, I have heard all that more than a thousand times."

He thought himself a hero; he was merely a copy and a dupe, biting at a bare hook, poor boy. The Frenchman found in him no hero, only a baby and a bore. My friends, all the way down the scale of selfish pleasure-seeking it is mere self-hurting idiocy, —so easy to go down, so hard to climb back.

You have gone down the slope only a little, and the grade is not steep as yet; you are quite sure that you can control the horses, and you have a good brake. Every man at the foot of the steep started down just as you are doing, never meant to let things get beyond his control. You say that it is all innocent enough, and you can point out myriads of others doing the same thing. You can challenge any one to show you the harm of it; but you have not headed your horses the right way. The center of your life is not in Christ. Going on in selfish indulgence, in a life absorbed in self and pleasure, you are driving on to danger.

One night that man of God, the Rev. Campbell Morgan, had been by the bedside of a dying man in the town of Hull in the north of England, and had left his friend sunk in his last, long sleep. About four o'clock, before the graying of dawn, as he was turning the corner of a street, he suddenly came face to face with a young fellow, the son of Christian parents, who was going fast down the steep of sin.

The young man was hurrying home after a night of gayety. Mr. Morgan took him by the hand, looked into his face and said:

“Charley, when are you going to stop this kind of thing?”

The two men were about of an age; the one clean, fresh, bright with the color of glowing life, the other with sunken cheek and bloodshot eye and the gray, ashen hue of debauchery. The hand of the too-soon-aged man trembled in the firm clasp of his questioner as he said:

“What do you mean by asking me when I am going to stop?” Dropping his voice, which quivered with emotion, he continued:

“I would lose that hand here and now, if I knew how to stop.”

He had found that the grade is steeper as you go down. Oh, if that young man had only had an acquaintance with the “strong Son of God, Immortal Love,” he might have laid his head upon that ever-ready shoulder, and told all the story of his sin and slavery. Then with the strength of that unfailing hand he could rise to make the bravest battle of his life, to fall wounded, it might be, to rise again, dazed and dizzy, to fight on, battered and baffled, yet unconquered, until his arm grew stronger and his step firmer, until the shadows lightened and the fiend

flew away. Was it even then too late? He thought it was; but he did not know our Saviour, the depth of His patience, the might of His love. But why should any one go through that fearful fight? All the despairing agony of it may be spared by turning this hour to the light and climbing to the heights of clearer air and boundless vision. There is enough in this world of pain and failure and heartlessness and lonely bereavement, and it comes suddenly and soon. Shall we not make ready to meet it now? Why should we be castaways on the desolate strand of life, bankrupt and friendless, after the storm? Brave now, but broken then, and silent the boast of our blind boldness! Shall we not rather acquaint ourselves with Him, and be at peace?

Did you ever read "The Charioteer"? That poem, too, is a story of failure, written by a man who knows young life, Professor Amos R. Wells, editor of *The Christian Endeavor World*:

"O God, take the reins of my life!
I have driven it blindly to left and to right,
In mock of the rock, in the chasm's despite,
Where the brambles were rife.
In the blaze of the sun and the deadliest black of the night,
O God, take the reins of my life!

"For I am weary and weak:
My hands are a-quiver and so is my heart,

And my eyes are too tired for the tear-drops to start,
And the worn horses reek
With the anguishing pull and the hot, heavy harness's
smart,
While I am weary and weak.

"But Thou wilt be peace, wilt be power.
Thy hand on the reins and Thine eyes on the way
Shall be wisdom to guide and controlling to stay,
And my life, in that hour,
Shall be led into leading, and rest when it comes to obey;
For Thou wilt be peace and all power.

"Now, Lord, without tarrying, now!
While eyes can look up and while reason remains,
And my hand yet has strength to surrender the reins,
Ere death stamp my brow
And pour coldness through all the mad course of my veins.
Come, Lord, without tarrying, now!"

If ever the reason attain its right, the soul will desire to find its rest in Him, for other resting-place does not exist in all the world. As Augustine wrote fifteen centuries ago: "Our heart is restless till it rest in Thee." Sometime in all the whirl of life the heart is lonely and we think of mother, of the patient welcome of her open arms and the soothing of the gentle hand. The bravest hearts are lonely sometimes, the strongest frames are tired. Some day we shall desire to lay down our head and rest; and the thought of mother and the thought of the great

Heart from whom mother learned her brooding tenderness come with welcome and yearning to the man who has come to himself, and who at length weighs rightly the values of life.

Ian Maclaren brings to a close his sketches of the people of Drumtochty with the description of the departure of the old physician, William McClure, worn out with the work and the exposure of the years. The dying doctor told his friend, who was watching beside him, to take his mother's Bible from the top of the bureau and read; and he told him to shut the book and let it open of itself, and he would find the place where the doctor had been reading for the past month. Drumheug opened, and read the parable of the two men who went to the temple to pray, closing with the words:

"And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes to heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me, a sinner."

Then the doctor said:

"That micht hae been written for me, Paitrick, or ony ither auld sinner that has feenished his days an' hes naething tae say for himsel'.

"It wesna easy for me tae get tae kirk, but a' cud hae managed wi' a stretch, an a' used langidge a' sudna, and a' micht hae been gentler, and no been so short in the temper. A' see it a' noo.

“It’s ower late tae mend, but ye’ll maybe juist say to the fouk that I wes sorry, an’ am houping that the Almichty ’ill hae mercy on me.”

Then he took his friend by the hand, and bade him good-by, for he might not be able to know him much longer. And then he said:

“Noo a’ll say ma mither’s prayer and hae a sleep, but ye’ ll no leave me till a’ is ower.”

Then he repeated, as he had done every night of his life:

“This night I lay me down to sleep,
I pray the Lord my soul to keep,
And if I die before I wake,
I pray the Lord my soul to take.”

Then he thought that he was out in the storm, going to see a poor woman in a dangerous illness. It was a long, hard journey, and now they were coming home, and he could see the light in the window, and he said:

“It’s been a stiff journey; a’m tired . . . a’m tired tae deith.”

There was a silence, and then he began to repeat that psalm which is in the heart of every Scotchman from the cradle to the grave:

“The Lord’s my shepherd, I’ll not want,
He makes me down to lie

In pastures green: He leadeth me
The quiet waters by."

Steadily on went the voice, reaching the last stanza; and in the middle of it he hesitated. He had gone back to his boyhood and thought he was preparing it for his mother, and this is what his friend heard:

"Goodness and mercy all my life
Shall surely follow me—

"Follow me. Shall surely follow me. . . .
What's next? Mither said I wes tae hae't ready
when she cam.

"'A'll come afore ye gang tae sleep, Wullie, but
ye 'ill no get yir kiss unless ye can feenish the psalm.'

"And . . . in God's house . . . for evermore
my . . . Hoo dis it rin? A' canna mind the next
word . . . my, my . . . It's ower dark noo tae
read it, an' mither 'ill sune be comin'."

His friend leaned forward and whispered into his
ear, "My dwelling place, Weelum."

"That's it, that's it a' noo; wha said it?

"And in God's house for evermore
My dwelling-place shall be.

"A'm ready noo, an' a'll get ma kiss when
mither comes; a' wish she wud come, for a'm tired
an' wantin tae sleep.

“Yon’s her step . . . an’ she carryin’ a licht in her hand; a’ see it through the door.

“Mither! a’ kent ye wudna forget yir laddie, for ye promised tae come, an’ a’ve feenished ma psalm.

“And in God’s house for evermore
My dwelling-place shall be.

“Gie me the kiss, mither, for a’ve been waitin’ for ye, an’ a’ll sune be asleep.”

Yes, my friends, the night is coming when once more we shall long for mother. We reach out for the old mother comfort; and those who know, may find it where mother found it, and learned it, in the bosom of mother’s God. Would you be sure that you then shall find it? Find it now. Acquaint thyself with Him, and be at peace.

VII

THE WAY OF CALVARY



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THE CRUCIFIXION—*Guido Reni*

VII

THE WAY OF CALVARY

"When they were come to the place which
is called Calvary, there they crucified Him."
Luke, 23:33.

THE brief sentence chosen to guide our thought this evening would awaken no association whatever in the mind of one unacquainted with the Christian Scriptures, yet it brings up before your thought a picture, vivid, eloquent, persuasive, dominant in the Christian's life. To him it is the event of all events, which interprets for him the heart of his heavenly Father. In it he reads the justice, the compassion, and the love of God. You who have gathered here this evening need not that the story be told you; you know it as you know the prayer you first uttered at your mother's knee. Let us therefore, without further introduction, occupy ourselves with one feature of the teaching which exists for us in those familiar words.

One day, not long ago, I was wandering with some friends through the historic city where, at the close

of the sixteenth century, was issued the famous edict of Nantes, the charter of French Protestant freedom, a city become well known to our soldier boys by their occupation of the barracks and their roaming about its streets. We had seen the cathedral, the canals, the Museum of Art, the Stock Exchange, the statue of General Cambronne, who had commanded the old Guard at Waterloo, where, according to the popular story, to the demand for surrender he uttered the defiant rejoinder, "The Guard dies, but never surrenders"; all that we had seen, and much else. Then we drove to the retail center of the town, and began to descend a street thronged with people busy with the affairs of every day. Suddenly, on the corner of a house, my eye caught the name of the street, and in a moment all that bustling life was blotted out of my thought, and I was in another street in a far-off city, up whose pavement a throng was moving, ascending as did the crowd before us, and in the midst of them toiled upward a bowed, blood-stained Man, His face disfigured with blows and spitting; and He was bearing a cross. The name of the street there in Nantes was the Way of Calvary; and the name of the street there in old Jerusalem was the Via Dolorosa, the Street of Sorrow, the Way of Calvary.

There was the bustle of business, of bargaining, of buying; and there, overhead, was the title of the

street, the Way of Calvary, and no one of all the hundreds hurrying there seemed to have a thought of the world-tragedy which those words recalled.

It has to do with the interpretation of God to man, that awful ascent of pain. God has been imparting Himself to man ever since man began to be, using the relations which existed among men to explain the relation of the Creator to the creature, of the Teacher to the taught, of the Ruler to the ruled, of the Lover to the loved. This best relation of God to man was revealed far back in the history of religion; but somehow man was slow to grasp it,—is slow to-day.

Even a casual reading of the Bible would make it evident to a thoughtful person that God has given to man a progressive revelation, unfolding and expanding as man was able to receive it. So we read that God told Moses that He did not reveal Himself as Jehovah in His dealings with Abraham and the other patriarchs. So we read that before His death our Lord told His disciples that He had many things to disclose to them, which as yet they were unable to receive, and we learn that later some of those things were fully explained.

It is instructive to follow out the steps of this divine unfolding. Far back in the early days we read of God revealing Himself as the Friend of

Abraham, and binding Himself in a covenant of blessings. In the time of Moses, when the Hebrews had become accustomed to the government of Egypt, having a code of laws and a bench of judges, God gave them similar, tho better, laws, together with ceremonies, like, but loftier than, the Egyptian. He took the title Jehovah-nissi, Jehovah my Banner, as He went before them in a snowy cloud as their wilderness Guide; and the entire emphasis of the teaching was that the law laid upon them was their guide-book to national prosperity.

As the generations came pressing on, there was fuller revelation. Israel was called the Son of Jehovah, who had purchased and rescued him. Therefore was it the duty of the nation to revere God, as the son in the Orient to-day shows deference and obedience to his father. The thought of the East, then as now, was and is that the father has a wider experience and a fuller wisdom than the son, and is better able to decide for him. I well remember that our dragoman or guide in Palestine was troubled that his father wished him to marry a woman to whom he was not attracted; but, so great was the traditional influence of a father's authority in the East, that he did not feel at liberty to seek out some one else. It would be to break with his entire family connection. We may deplore the hard-

ship of such a situation, yet we must admit that in the majority of instances the Orient is wiser in this honor paid to the wisdom of the father, than is the Occident with all its headstrong freedom. Then, as we run our eyes over the books of the prophets, we find that many human relations are employed to interpret the ways of God to His people. The love and attachment of husband and wife; the care of the farmer for his vineyard, his proper expectation that it reward his labor with good fruit; the king and his disloyal subjects; the cattle and their good sense in knowing who it was that cared for their well-being—all these relations were used to train the nation to a higher spiritual life.

Through all the national literature extend these comparisons; but we may note that in addition there was provided a system of object-lessons by which God sought to teach His people and train them to a habit of pure self-restraint. All down the ages, not only in Israel, but also among all nations, there has been the conception of the need of sacrifice. Man has sinned, and he knows it. He has the sense of having offended his God. He has a conviction that without sacrifice there is no possibility of restoring the friendly relation between himself and the King to whom he owes obedience. In all these ages man has been offering in sacrifice living creatures, the

practise dating back to the beginning of history. It is the notion of a guiltless being taking the place of a guilty being. To the modern mind there is something repulsive in the thought. Such a substitution seems unfair and unwarranted. It is this feature of the atonement of Christ which has provoked most discussion. In revolt from such a teaching not a few have turned from the historic creed of the Church. "Why," say they, "why must God have blood? We can not believe it. God is love." So, by a short cut, they imagine themselves escaped from the difficulty. They say that it can not be; and there they rest.

But the great problems of the world are not to be solved by short cuts and facile phrases. There is the Way of Calvary; and before our eyes Christ is ever climbing it, and sinking beneath His cross. The short cut is too easy. It leaves the mystery deeper than ever, in view of the crucified Christ.

Down in the subcellar of this question of substitution lies a principle, not wholly missed in the literature of the subject, and yet remaining to-day much too obscure. This principle is that the selection of an innocent being as the substitute for the guilty is typical, emblematic, illustrative—what you will—of the nature of sin.

If man, in the first instance, was taught in some

way by the revelation of God to choose a guiltless being as a substitute for the guilty, it was the most simple and impressive of object lessons. Did man understand it then? Does he understand it now? Do you?

If any one should say that the notion of sacrifice is horrible, he would speak the exact truth. Sacrifice is horrible. There should be no sacrifice. But sin is horrible. There should be no sin. Sin is the more horrible because it exacts a sacrifice, and that sacrifice is exacted of the guiltless. What is meant by this is easily made clear. Sin hurts the sinner in himself. The fact that he can think as he does, is proof of the damage. Any doing that may issue from it, is merely the expression of the thinking.

Sin hurts the sinner, but it also hurts those who do not consent to the act, who would dissuade him from it, who are pained by the knowledge that he has committed sin. In most cases it goes further than that. There is ordinarily mental and frequently physical suffering attending every act of wrongdoing. The horrible thing in this world is the agony of the innocent wrought by the commission of sin. It is because of sin that the world has been the wide, wild slaughter-house which history discloses, in which the more numerous and more agonized victims have been those who did not belong to the combat, the

weak, the helpless, the more refined, the more sensitive to suffering.

In New York City a number of years ago, a widow of refinement and of Christian principle conducted a boarding-house to support herself and family. Her youngest boy, when the busy woman was unable to watch over him, read the cheap, sensational literature which makes heroes of rough-riding cow-boys and Indian fighters. By the time he was seventeen he had dreams of heroic grandeur of the tawdry kind; and at length he managed to get money enough to take him out to the plains, where he learned to drink whisky, to herd cattle, and to curse like a cow-boy. To him the height of heroism was to shoot up the town. But cow-boys were numerous in that region, and he soon discovered that he was only one of a crowd, and not even a leader among them. Somewhat disappointed in that land of his dreams, he returned to New York, where his bowie-knife and revolver easily terrorized his mother's guests, and bade fair to empty her house and deprive her of her livelihood. Alarmed by his threats of murder, that refined mother was constrained to go to the police station to ask for protection. Wild and vicious as he was, his mother loved that baby boy of hers, even through her distress and terror; and she staggered as she approached the Sergeant's desk to make her

complaint. When the faltering words were uttered, she turned away from the desk, put her hand to her heart, gave a moan of anguish, cried out, "Oh, my heart is breaking," and fell to the floor never to breathe again. And so once more was the innocent offered for the selfish, ruthless, merciless demand of sin.

Some one may say, "Oh, that was an extreme instance"; but will not the more accurate second thought negative that impression? Whether were it more excruciating, to suffer a crushing anguish quickly ended, or to endure for months, or even years, the evil words and deeds of a person degraded, yet dear? Oh! the nights of anxiety and the prayers wrung from a tortured heart. Oh! the days of despair when the oft-repeated supplications seem to be unheeded of Heaven. And, even worse, the slow breaking down of the moral horror at the thought of the sin, the lessening repulsion toward the repeated acts of evil! It is not so easy to love a person and continue to hate that which he does. As the days go by, the degrading enormity of it becomes less vivid: the soul's condemnation of it less intense.

That this is true in the sphere of what is ordinarily called culture, Tennyson indicates in his "Locksley Hall"; speaking of a woman who is married to a man lacking in refinement, he writes:

"Yet it shall be: thou shalt lower to his level 'day by day,
What is fine within thee growing coarse to sympathize
with clay.

"As the husband is, the wife is: thou art mated with a
clown,
And the grossness of his nature will have weight to drag
thee down."

In the moral sphere the influence of the evil presence is even more insidiously harmful. In his "Essay on Man," Alexander Pope has stated the case in that familiar quatrain:

"Vice is a monster of so frightful mien,
As to be hated needs but to be seen:
Yet seen too oft, familiar with her face,
We first endure, then pity, then embrace."

The proof of this is furnished by every age, by every land. Even the wise king, Solomon, was weaned away from Jehovah to base idolatry by the influence of the heathen women whom, for political reasons, he had brought into his palace. In all the centuries since then have we examples of those who began well, but were slowly lured from the principles which once were dominant in their lives.

In the France of 1789, in the great meeting of the States-General which brought in the Revolution, was a young lawyer of some thirty-one years, edu-

cated at Paris and appointed judge of the diocese of that Arras famous of old for its tapestries. One day he had before him a criminal whose crime was clearly proven, and by the law of the land his life was forfeit. So tender of heart was this young jurist, that rather than pronounce the fatal sentence, he resigned his judgeship, stating that his conscience would not permit him to doom any fellow-man to death. The Revolution came on in blood and burning. Its advance was a ruthless reign of terror. One faction after another went down in blood. The young lawyer came to the head of affairs and sent hundreds to that inexorable Revolutionary Tribunal whose sentence, almost invariably, was death. At length his own partizans began to revolt at his despotism, and, by a swifter process than his own, voted him an outlaw, and sheared away his head by the dripping guillotine to save their own. It was Maximilien Robespierre, the judge whose conscience forbade that death-sentence. Was ever clearer demonstration of the deadly downpull of the presence of repeated crime?

So, by a double attack sin assails and demands an innocent victim. The ages had their reminder of this vicious characteristic of sin in the world-wide custom of sacrifice. But the force of the teaching was weakened by the fact that the ordinary victims were

commonly used for food; and the extraordinary human victims were themselves not free from sin. That the form of the teaching might become definite, personal, persuasive, some new object-lesson was needed to work what the old method failed to perform. The world-conditions necessary for the purpose came into conjunction—a religion, a language, and a law—and the Great Object-Lesson was presented to the world.

How well you know the story from the humility of Bethlehem's cradle to the humiliation of Calvary's cross! You have followed the course of that stainless life, of that marvelous patience, of that matchless tenderness, of that peerless purity. When John named Him to the disciples by the flow of Jordan, he set forth in one word the innocence and the sacrifice: "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world."

It was not alone an example of sinlessness which the conditions demanded; that had been easier to give. The Holy One of God could have come among men to tell the story of God's love and to live the life of God's purity, and the darkness of Golgotha never have been written. Thrice in the life of our Lord did He show Himself able to foil the violence of men: Once in His boyhood's home in Nazareth, when they led Him to the precipice to

hurl Him down, and He passed away through the midst of them unharmed; once in Jerusalem, when they took up stones to stone Him and He escaped their rage; once in the Garden, when in the glare of the torches He faced the Temple Guard and said, "I am He," and they staggered backward and fell before His steady gaze. So might it have been ever. He might have displayed to the world His unmatched example of spotlessness, protecting Himself by His divine power throughout a sufficient number of years; and then He might have risen in splendor to the skies, in attestation of His celestial origin, leaving the world instructed as to its duty and as to the possibility of sinlessness even in the frailty of human flesh.

This might he have done: but it would have left the great task still unaccomplished. There yet would have been lacking an unmistakable exhibition of the merciless character of sin, of the demand which sin makes for a stainless victim, of the full length to which sin will go in its revolt against the Holy.

So, therefore, the Son of the Highest came as a man, and was accepted and rejected. Publicans and Magdalenes sought and found peace; but other Publicans and Magdalenes were unattracted, perchance repelled. Some of the saintly sought Him, and gave thanks; but the religious leaders rejected

Him with apprehension and hate. The masses ran after Him to be fed; but they failed to grasp His teaching, seeking for some wondrous act of power, instead of learning to imitate His beneficent purity. So He walked among men, rejected, challenged, contradicted, cursed, the pent-up rage of His rejectors at length breaking forth in the midnight mob, the morning mockery of trial, the scourging, and the cross. They terrified Pilate into condemning Him, and the national leaders followed the soldiers to the place of execution to fling their scorn at Him in His dying agony. It was the supreme exhibition of the nature of sin in its demand for an innocent victim. Sin did not hesitate, tho the sufferer should be the Son of God.

From the early centuries of Christianity to the present day the various branches of art have sought to express the poignancy of suffering in the central event in history. No more noble and notable achievement is known to art than the great altar-piece of Guido Reni in the ancient church of San Lorenzo in Lucina in the heart of old Rome. The artist, Guido Reni, was born in Bologna, Italy, in 1575 and lived until 1642. He studied in the atelier of Annabile Carracci, who instructed his pupils to avoid the heavy shadows and glaring light of Carravaggio, declaring

that a more delicate manner with pleasing soft colors would prove to be more popular. Guido immediately began to experiment, following his master's advice, with the eventual outcome that he became famous, not only in his own city, but in Rome and elsewhere.

Every year multitudes of Americans visit the Rospigliosi Palace in Rome to view the frescoed ceiling of delightfully grouped figures in soft and harmonious coloring, and they acknowledge that rightly the "Aurora" is rated as one of the twelve greatest pictures in the world, giving homage to the memory of the artist, Guido Reni.

The same noted name draws many aside to the church of the Cappuccini in the same city, to gaze on the altar-piece in the first chapel at the right of the entrance. It sets forth Guido's conception of the archangel Michael overcoming Satan and casting him down to chain him. It is the only treatment of the subject which is comparable with Raffael's idea of the same subject, now hanging in the Gallery of the Louvre in Paris. However men may argue as to other features, one thing is unquestioned, and that is that, whereas Raffael's Michael is masculine in mold and manner, the archangel of Guido is, as the Scriptures teach, neither male nor female, a being

possessing the beauty and grace of womanhood with the vigor and muscular strength of manhood, so fulfilling the Biblical type.

A third creation of this seventeenth century master is the stately "Crucifixion" over the high altar in San Lorenzo in Lucina, which Robert Browning mentions in "The Ring and the Book":

"Just at this altar, beneath the piece
Of Master Guido, Christ on cross,
Second to naught observable in Rome."

It has been styled the loneliest picture in the world. The Son of God in the agony of crucifixion, under a dark, angry sky, and in the background the city which crucified Him. It is the supreme moment when the Redeemer utters that lone cry of despair, "Why hast Thou forsaken Me?" the darkest hour since man began to be.

So at length the suffering of the countless innocent victims since sin came to earth, found its culmination in the tragedy of the cross, the crowning horror of all that ghastly nightmare of guilt. Thus by a supreme example was there displayed to the world the incorrigible destructiveness of sin. It was God Himself upon whom was put this stupendous affront. Both Sacrifice and Sacrificer were God. Only such an event could God regard as equivalent

to the penalty due mankind for the sin which was carrying down the human race to ever deeper degradation. It is one of the mysteries of the ages, awaiting complete unfolding in the brightness of eternal day. For us it is bright with the mercy of God, who spared not His own Son that He might shock man in his sinful course, and by a peerless lesson of love, win us to the pureness of His everlasting home.

Christ trod the Way of Calvary, and laid down His life for love of us; but so bitter and blinding a thing is sin that there are some hearts which even so mighty a love does not win. We often hear it said that love conquers all things: but it is false, false to our knowledge of life every day we live. And we know it. Christianity is not Universalism. Were it so, it would be false to the world as it is. Christ did not find the world otherwise than it is to-day. He taught the law of love: but He did not say that all men would yield to it. Love does not conquer all things, for the sinful and the selfish heart is hard. One time in the dreamy old city of Florence we were served week after week by a maid, bright, alert, refined, intelligent, trusted, who was bound to a husband unsmiling, surly, morose, irascible, given to unbridled outbursts of anger. He was the one blemish in an ideal establishment; and he was retained merely because they could not do without his

wife, so indispensable had she become to her employers.

One evening, when she had completed her work in the room, we spoke of America, where she could use the English she was studying so faithfully. She said that, if she were free, she would gladly go to America; but her husband knew no English, and would not go, so she must remain. And then her heart overflowed, and she told us her story. She said that when they met she was young, and he had been kind to her, so she thought life would be happier if they married. That was the way it came about. But she said that Frederico was nervous—"nervoso," that was what she called it—nothing more. There were times, she said in her pretty Tuscan Italian, there were times—"Devo stare silente"—"I must be silent." She put her finger across her lips, and the big tears welled up in her true, brown eyes, and rolled down the tired cheeks, and dropped to the floor. We learned afterward that when her husband was angry, he struck her!—Wretch that he was!

Poor Giannina! It was she who was holding him in his situation, with all his unacceptability. She was that rare and priceless treasure, an efficient, faithful servant; and she insured him his place, and bore with his passion, and showed him an example of kindness, and loved him with all his spitefulness and

violence. But the years were going. The fresh, young life was fading, and love had failed to conquer, and she trod the path of suffering alone.

And we—are we so very different from that unloving man, we with whom the Saviour bears every day in patient love? How can there be any sacrifice other or greater than He made, and is making for us? Is not sin showing its viciousness day by day, our sin, if we accept all His kindnesses and all His service, and yet abuse His love? So forever is the Man of Sorrows climbing anew the Way of Calvary. O men and women for whom He died, can you reenact that old, dark tragedy, and reject Him once again as the world did on that day?

He came to save: but He can save only those who accept Him as their Saviour and their Captain. However much His love is wounded by refusal, He can not save those who turn away from Him. It is the one way of salvation, my brother. Accept Him, and He will make you strong to conquer, so that as victor shall you enter into the City of Peace.

VIII

HOPE FOR THE HOPELESS





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THE HEAD OF DAVID—*Michelangelo*

VIII

HOPE FOR THE HOPELESS

"God our Saviour willeth that all men should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth."

I *Timothy*, 2:4.

"The Lord is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

II *Peter*, 3:9.

FEW sights in this world are more touching, yes, even heartrending, than the sorrow of a parent over a wayward child. If there were any purpose of selfishness in it, if there were any insistence on the arbitrary will of the parent, all sympathy would pass away; but when the father would lead his boy to honor, and shield him from the temptations of the world, and restrain him from dashing himself down to misery and despair, then the solicitude and apprehension and anguish make the profoundest appeal to the emotions of those who witness that depth of unselfish grief.

Some years ago there was in the city of Philadelphia a young man of bright promise, who was

unusually prosperous in his business; in fact, the ease with which he acquired wealth seemed to be a misfortune, and became the occasion of a reckless expenditure which led downward into a vicious life. So noticeable became his irregularities that his partners in a private interview told him that his manner of living was hurting the business, and they demanded that he should either alter his habits or give up his interest in the concern. He was startled by this interview, and controlled himself for a time; but soon again he yielded himself to pleasure. His partners had patience with him, but at length it became evident that his fall was even lower than before, and his associates insisted that he should accept a cash equivalent for his share and retire from the firm. Thus all restraint was removed and a large sum of money put into hands already too willing to misuse it. His descent was swift until there came a day when his body was found floating in the river, and the world knew that he had taken his own life. Surely that is a sad story of misdirected existence; but sadder is it that for years thereafter there went about the streets of that city an old man, mourning for the son of his love and hope, whose life had been thrown away. As the father trod those pavements, his eyes were bent upon the ground. Sometimes as he moved among the throngs the tears rolled un-

heeded down his cheeks, because of the squandered life. Who could be indifferent to the tears of so stricken a father in the hopeless numbness of his grief?

Those whose sympathies can enter into the heart of a father, can realize that the more oppressed and entangled and helpless in the meshes of temptation might be his wayward son, the greater his tenderness for the struggler, the stronger his desire to reach down and save. Theologians have spent too much time on the question of the limit of the divine persuasion in the human soul. That is something which the Scriptures do not reveal. In the case of every man who does not finally yield to the pleading of God's Holy Spirit, tho the loving pressure of divine persuasion may have steadily increased, it never has passed the point when persuasion becomes compulsion. In mechanics we observe that materials have a maximum of resistance, which may be determined for the various kinds of material. There are bricks which can resist a crushing force of three thousand pounds to the square inch, and there is granite which can resist a pressure of twenty-five thousand pounds. Compressed beyond those limits the substance would be crushed and pulverized. Is it otherwise with the human soul? There is a maximum of resistance. Spiritual pressure exerted beyond that limit would

destroy the will. As with materials the maximum varies, so is it with men.

What is suggested by the consideration of this law is the thought that, if necessary, the love of God urges man toward righteousness up to the maximum of the cohesive strength of his free-agency. Beyond that line lies inertness, passivity, existence without self-determination. Increase of pressure would mean collapse of manhood. The man would be dehumanized. He would become something else and less than man. Some persons are quickly and easily attracted by the love of God, some yield to gentle pressure under the divine touch, some are hardly persuaded. Would that the grades of resistance ended there. Some, we know, are not persuaded; they stiffen themselves against the loving pressure of the Father's hand. Some there are who pass out of human sight and communication with no manifestation of yielding to the persuasion of the voice of Love. They go out into silence, and send back no message of repentance and reconciliation. Over the future condition of such persons both reason and revelation cast a shadow, sad and somber; but we are assured that no man reaches that estate in accordance with the will of God. The declaration of almighty Love is none other than this: "God willeth that all men should be saved."

What we have thus briefly set forth may serve to explain that in defiance of the divine wish men may fail of the salvation which is pardon, peace, eternal life. It needs to be emphasized, however, that men have thought too much upon this feature of the case; and that they have thought too little by far upon that which the Lord Himself has chosen to make prominent, the fact that the love of God extends to every human being on all the broad earth. It is not merely that God in a certain grand and patronizing fashion is willing that His sun should lighten the steps of the ill-doer and that His rain should water the fields of the man whose hand is raised against Him. If that were all, it were incomplete; but if the rain and the sunshine be typical of a true and thoughtful love which desires the real good even of the unthankful and the evil, then it is something worthy of man's deepest reverence and joyous gratitude.

When men gain the impression that God is tired of them and is taking pains to nag them and to make their lives an exasperation, there need be no special wonder that they should stride through life in sullen defiance. Misrepresentation of the divine teaching has produced many an infidel. What humanity needs to know is that the divine love never ceases, no matter how foully man abuses himself; that the tenderness of our Father is only the more pitiful when man has

rendered himself a wreck, despised by the world, which has not learned the truth of God. This is what He said long, long ago: "O Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee? O Judah, what shall I do unto thee? for your goodness is as a morning cloud, and as the early dew it goeth away. How shall I give thee up, O Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee up, O Israel? O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in Me is thy help." God is eternal, and God is love, therefore eternal love. Whatever your disobedience, whatever your viciousness, whatever your doubts, however disastrous a wreck you have made of your life, God loves you; and the thing He most desires regarding you is that you would permit Him to make your life the glad and honorable and glorious story which is possible even yet through His grace. The gospel of the Word of God is no less than that. God would make you a conqueror in this world. It may be that you have set Him a stupendous task, and it may be that you would prove at best an unready, reluctant learner. That makes no difference in the intensity of His desire that you would only give Him a chance to show how good He can be to you, and how good He wants to be. If ever you have been picturing God as impatient with you, you have made a huge blunder, the greatest mistake of your life. This is the way He puts it: "The Lord

is long-suffering"—that is, patient—"towards us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

That brings up another thought. The good Lord wants you, wants you in His imperial home; and that means that He wants you to be fit to associate with the company living there. We never can talk too much about the love of God so long as we tell what the love of God desires for us. To talk about love sometimes may be misleading, because there are so many in this world who do not love truly and wisely. In the weakness and ignorance of their fondness they damage those they wish to please. True love always desires the lasting good of the beloved. Such is the love of God. It is not a silly, doting, unreasoning affection, giving the reward of right-doing to the wrong-doer. That would be to encourage him to go on in his sin. It does not lie in the constitution of this world that sin should be anything else than suffering. God wants to save us from that very thing, the suffering which is inherent in sin. The only way to do that is to save us from sin itself.

Almost everybody is willing to be saved from one or two sins. Almost every one makes no little effort to be rid of some sins; but salvation means rescue from sin, all kinds of sin, those which we do not like

and those which we love. Unless we are freed from all our fetters, we are not free at all. Let us say that here is a man bound with seven chains, made fast to a great iron ring. He is weighed down with them, he can not rise and walk, and he calls aloud for help. What if I should offer him my assistance, and he should accept it gladly. I bring here a hammer and a cold-chisel, and begin to cut at the rivets of his shackles. At length the first chain falls loose, and he is full of delight. I begin cutting at another, and that falls away. Another yields. We are working together, he and I, tho I am doing most of the work. Only two are left as the fifth chain goes clanking down on the floor. The man fairly leaps with delight, exclaiming: "This is great. I never imagined that freedom would be anything as good as this!"

"Very well," I remark: "now let us go at the other two." Thereupon he gathers up the two remaining chains and holds them behind his back, saying:—

"What! Are you not going to leave me anything at all? I can't give up these."

"But I want to set you free. I thought that you wanted me to free you altogether."

"Of course I do; but you're not leaving anything at all. It is too much to expect of me that I should give up all that I have had all my life." He never

had anything except his pitiable fetters; and he clings to them as if they were freedom.

That is a picture of too many in this world of sin. They want to be saved, but they want to keep their shackles—not all, of course, but some. So is it that multitudes are still in bondage. They will not permit the loving Lord to strike the fetters from their souls. There is a great difference between sorrowing because sin has brought trouble and sorrowing because sin is enslaving us. A genuine repentance is twofold; it includes sorrow for the past sin and also hatred of sin because it drags us down. A true repentance is a strong desire to be rid of everything that hinders our free advance in the way of holiness.

The sinner—and that means every one who sins—has a fire burning within him, smoldering perhaps, perhaps raging madly, but a fire invariably and all the while. Now let us suppose that God by His grace has come and put that fire out; it is all right now, is it not? No! my friends, it is not all right. Something more is left to be done, and a very large something. Some years ago as our vessel lay at the pier at Norfolk, there rode at anchor out in the bay a large vessel, discolored and dismantled, bearing the cruel marks of fire. She rode there high in the water, turning about with the change of the tide. It seemed to be a foolish waste of money that such a

great hull should not be refitted with masts, have her machinery repaired and oiled up, and the vessel put to some useful work. I inquired of an officer, standing by the rail, why that vessel lay there, and whether it was not possible that she should be re-decked and employed in her former business.

"No, sir," was his answer; "she is nothing but scrap-iron. They will sell her before long, and break her up." Then he told me that the fire had warped her plates, and twisted her hull; and then, as I looked more attentively, I could see that the stern was bent out of line, and the waist had a list to starboard; and I could understand the reason why the officer had said that she was useless, because she could not steer. The true lines of her hull had been wholly destroyed. She was as truly a wreck as if she had been pounding on the rocks.

Now that is a picture of the sinner after the fire of sin is put out. If all the past were forgiven, as God says He will forgive; yet there would remain all the twists and distortions of character, which make it impossible for the sinner to steer straight. It is not enough that he is deeply sorry for his sin, and strongly determined to do better. More than that is needed to undo the effects of the past. If there were a power great enough to seize that vessel in its mighty grasp, and, without starting a plate or crack-

ing a beam, straighten those wandering lines and conform them to the graceful model after which she was built, true the pistons and guiding rods, and render everything as it was before, then once again might that steamer grandly ride the seas and be the pride of her captain's heart. Human power could not perform that miracle, nor can human power restore the character deformed by the fires of sin. Nothing but divine power can work that change in any human being; and this is what God's love plans to do for every one who will yield to His gracious wonder-working. That is what salvation means.

There is but one danger in proclaiming the infinite love of God. Persons think that if God is so abounding in love, He will not be insistent on little things; and, trusting in this notion, they fail to yield themselves to God's transforming grace. They try to persuade themselves that certain things they like to do are not wrong. A man can talk himself into believing that wrong is right in a vast variety of instances.

Victor Hugo, who was an accurate observer of human nature, once wrote: "A man may be a wreck, as may a ship. Conscience is an anchor: but it is terrible as it is true that, like an anchor, conscience may be dragged." The soul is out on the heaving waters of life's sea. Passion takes the helm, or pleasure or commercial interest takes the helm, and

the ship drives on into the whirlpools. Out goes the anchor and grips at the base of the world, but the vessel is buffeted and tossed by the angry waters into which she has driven, and the anchor drags. Unless the anchor hold, the ship is lost. So has it been with many a man. He has undertaken to do his own piloting, he has run his life-craft among the breakers. He trusts to the dictates of conscience; but he has been hushing conscience, he has been arguing with conscience. With regard to a host of matters he is quite content: the rest of the world does them. He has been dragging his anchor, and beyond the breakers lie the cruel rocks. Have we not read in the Book of God: "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death"?

It is not a question of the greatness of the love of God; it is a question of the love of man. God loves us; but if we do not love God, we are lost. God desires to bring us to the only true blessedness, which is likeness to Himself. Saving is sanctifying. Whoever refuses to be sanctified, refuses salvation.

I have read of a young man who left his home and went into a great city. Not long thereafter he yielded to the temptations which surrounded him, and his father heard of his fall. With a heart full

of love he set out to find his son. It was a long, lonely, loathsome search; but at length that faithful love was rewarded. In a foul den of infamy that father found his boy, and said to him, "My son, come home." The young man was touched by the love which had sought him in his sin; he turned to his father, and was received in a passionate embrace. Now, my brother, consider. Could that son expect his father to come down and live with him and supply him with means to go on in that shameless life? However much his father may love him, is it not imperative that, to save him, he must lead his son out of that condition of foulness? It is not otherwise with our Father in Heaven. He can reach down to bring us out, but He can not become part of a life of sin. The Lord of the universe, in all the might of His infinite love, will not override the dignity of man's free agency. There is one place where the Omnipotence of Heaven pauses baffled, and that is before the closed doorway of the human soul. He knocks: but the latch is on the inside, and the string which controls it is within. Man must lift the latch or eternal blessedness can not come into his life.

In the history of art the name of names is Michelangelo Buonarotti: no name greater in all the toiling centuries. Master of masters was he in

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painting, in sculpture, in architecture. Born in a little town of the old Casentino, near the Verna, where St. Francis received the vision of the stigmata, where Angelo's father was a public officer of the Republic of Florence, he was apprenticed at the age of fourteen to the artist, Ghirlandajo, who was amazed at the genius of his pupil. When he was twenty-three, after he had executed the famous group now in the Church of St. Peter at Rome—the body of the crucified Christ supported on the knees of the sorrowing mother—he was advised to return to Florence and use a huge block of marble already spoiled by a sculptor of Fiesole. It had lain in the cathedral shops in Florence for years, regarded as a hopeless ruin. Michelangelo carefully measured the block, made a model of a titanic boy David with one foot on the head of Goliath, found that the block did not admit of such breadth of treatment, made another model, and then carved after its pattern the gigantic David now standing in the Museum of Fine Arts in Florence, one of the wonders of the world. So marvelous was the accuracy of his eye in estimating what might be done with that block of marble that on the back of the figure there remain some of the chiselings of the artist who failed.

To-day that discarded marble, chiseled into incomparable beauty, stands in a vast niche in the noble

entrance hall of the Florentine museum, a marvel of marvels before which the traveler pauses mute with admiration. You stand there and gaze up at it; and when you know the story it is something more than the colossal figure of an undeveloped shepherd boy, ready to speed from his sling that victorious pebble; vastly more than that. It is the symbol of a soul which man tried to carve into exquisite grace, and failed; but which a skilfuler hand also attempted and stroked into brave beauty of expectant faith.

That was only marble. Far greater is the miracle of every day when the Divine Artist lays His hand on the man who has failed to body forth his dreams of beauty, and who molds him into transfigured stateliness, a personality instinct with the divine life. The past may have been a pitiable failure; the present is a princely prophecy of inextinguishable, triumphant existence. The will of the Highest finds its complete fulfilment in the glorified human soul.

It is the miracle of the ages, the miracle of all the yesterdays and the miracle of to-day. That miracle He is ready to perform for you. Yes, even if you have come before, and given in your allegiance, and then failed Him. Oh, the shame of it! You can not think of trying again; but that makes no difference to Him. He is willing still. He is the only

being that never tires, for all being has its force from Him. As middle-age Dante wrote, He is

“That love which moves the sun in heaven and all the stars.”

That unwearied patience is pledged to you, even in all your failure. Let Him take the reins of your life, and the wheels of your chariot will turn smoothly and swiftly to and within the pearly gates. Once more, my brother, come to Him. Come home. He is not willing that any should perish. He will surely receive and rescue you. Come to Him. Come home.

IX

THE DOOR WAS SHUT





Courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

THE WISE AND FOOLISH VIRGINS—Piloty

IX

THE DOOR WAS SHUT

"The door was shut."
Matthew, 25:10.

ONE of the sources of power in our Saviour's teaching is His selection of the familiar actions of every day as the medium of His instruction: The mending of garments, the raising of bread, the sweeping of a room to find the lost money, the signs in the sky, the hen and her chickens, the sower and the soils, the farmer and the weeds, the creditor and the debtor.

More than once He chose the marriage customs of His people to illustrate His teaching. One of these parables claims our attention this evening. In every full-dress wedding of this western land the bride wears a veil. Many persons could not tell you why. Most persons will tell you that the bridal ring must go next to the little finger of the bride's hand: but few could tell you the reason. Moreover, not many could explain why the bridegroom must give

a ring rather than a necklace or a brooch or a bracelet. All these matters are inherited from ancient customs which once were significant and understood.

Marriage customs vary somewhat in the Orient, as they do in this land; but certain broad outlines are invariable, and what we see in the Orient to-day accords with what was common in the time of our Lord. The elaboration of detail depends largely on the wealth of the families involved. In all cases, however, on the day of the marriage, at a little after midday, the bride, accompanied by her maiden friends, and escorted by married women and preceded and followed by musicians, sets forth for the home of the bridegroom. We were halted in the town of Bethany by such a procession, which filled the street from one side to the other. It was led by men who were clapping their hands to the evolutions of two dancers who were executing a sword dance with slow graceful motions. The bride was on horseback, surrounded by women, and muffled to the eyes with a comprehensive white shawl which completely concealed her from the public.

On the arrival of the procession at the door of the bridegroom's home, the young man is in waiting, and, in some regions, he takes the bride in his arms and carries her into the house, taking care that her foot should not touch the threshold. In every case

he leads her to the apartments of the women, called the harem or hareem. There he leaves her in charge of his mother and other feminine relatives, from whom he returns to the public parts of the house, where are his masculine companions.

At nightfall he bathes, changes his clothing, and eats supper with his friends. About nine or ten o'clock a procession leaves the house for the mosque, where the bridegroom engages in prayer, after which the party returns with music and torches and song, ordinarily reaching the house about midnight. Thereupon the bridegroom enters once again the apartments of the women, and for the first time in his life looks into the face of his bride.

Such is the Mohammedan custom, evidently closely allied to the form prevalent in the time of our Lord. We may omit the mosque as coming later, but the night procession seems to have belonged to the earlier age, and it may have been associated with prayer. We have sufficient to make clear to us the forms on which our Lord based His instructions. He assures the Church that there is to be a time of rejoicing when the Bridegroom shall come to claim His bride.

Our Lord had been telling His disciples of the impending fall of Jerusalem and of the end of the dispensation, when He should appear in the heavens,

visible and terrible, for the judgment of His enemies and the eternal blessedness of those who looked with desire for His appearing. Thereupon He had said that the manner of the royal manifestation should be as when a bridegroom, long expected, comes suddenly, to find some ready and some unprepared.

The Lord has said that He shall come again, come in the clouds, come with hosts of His angels and of His saints, come for the judgment of the world. It is safe to say that the world does not want to believe it. He tells us that no man knows of the time of that coming. He warns His own to be ready, to be vigilant, to live as if in expectation of His immediate appearing. It is safe to say that a large part of the Church of Christ is indifferent to that prophecy of our Lord. Not a few are they who are determined not to believe in that second coming. To the thoughtful reader of the New Testament it is evident that the second coming of our Redeemer meant a great deal to the writers of the Scriptures. Our Saviour and His disciples regarded it with all seriousness. Any Christian who esteems it lightly is far from sympathy with the earnest declarations of our divine Master.

Two features of this prophecy are made unmistakable: The certainty of the coming and the uncertainty of the time. These two features indisputably

rule out two sorts of interpretations with respect to the time of His coming: those which set a date for His appearance, and those which postpone His appearance until after a specified time. To those who set a time our Lord has said: "In such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh"; and to those who say He can not come for a long time yet: "Watch, for ye know not on what day your Lord cometh."

The Westminster Confession of Faith has skilfully set forth the declaration of Scripture in the words: "As Christ would have us to be certainly persuaded that there shall be a day of judgment, both to deter men from sin, and for the greater consolation of the godly in their adversity; so will He have that day unknown to men, that they may shake off all carnal security, and be always watchful, because they know not at what hour the Lord will come; and be ever prepared to say, Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly. Amen."

By the instruction of the Parable of the Virgins, our Lord sadly tells us that when He shall return according to His promise, some will not be ready to receive Him. Let us pass over the details of this parable. Their hidden teaching does not at present concern us. Our Lord's method of instruction was exceedingly simple; in this instance the intensity of His meaning is written plainly across the face of the

story. The general features of an Oriental wedding, as recorded in the observations of travelers and dwellers in the East, are sufficient to acquaint us with the force of our Lord's teaching.

We have from an Oriental scholar an account of a wedding in which the details of the parable find a close parallel. It was midnight when the approach of the bridegroom was announced almost in the words of Scripture: "Behold, the bridegroom cometh: go ye out to meet him."

On hearing the cry, the guests lighted their lamps and marched in procession to the house, which the bridegroom almost immediately entered. At once the door was shut and guarded, excluding all comers.

What that might mean in the day of our Lord was brought very practically to the minds of our little party of four, which set out much behind time from Jerusalem one April afternoon to journey to Joppa. In the winding wady the darkness came early upon us, retarding our pace, so that it was half-past ten when we rumbled through the darkness of Joppa to our hotel.

Suddenly the horses paused before a lofty gateway closed by a heavy iron grating. Vainly our dragoon shook the grating. No response came from the dark mass of the building one hundred feet away. Taking a tool from the box, he struck on the bar and

the lock. There seemed great likelihood that we might be forced to spend the night without the gate. At last a light gleamed in one of the windows, and a moment later the landlord appeared with a lantern; but we had had time to realize the meaning of the Lord's beautiful parable: "*And the door was shut.*"

There has been a great deal of unnecessary and vapid pathos wasted on the inexorable teaching of this parable. Inexorable denotes that which can not be prayed away. It is therefore exactly applicable to this case. The teaching is of the inexorableness of the fate of those who are not ready when the Lord shall come. People say that God never will be so hard on men just for not being ready, that God will not tie us down to a single moment. Why, my friends, that thing is going on every day in life. Opportunity is open only for those who are prepared. A singer is wanted. All those who have neglected to prepare themselves for the position must be rejected. A chemist is wanted. Those who are not expert chemists will be rejected. Often it happens that only once in the lifetime of a person does an opening of a certain kind occur. If he be not ready at that moment, fate is inexorable, it can not be prayed away, the opportunity is lost.

The people of God are informed that those who enter into the host of the Conqueror on that day,

sing the song of Moses and of the Lamb. Those who do not train themselves to sing that song, shall remain without, and the door shall be shut. If, instead of arguing that our Lord has not told us the exact truth, the agitated friends would permit the force of the solemn truth to take possession of their lives, some of those who seem to be walking on, unprepared and indifferent, might be rescued from their fearful danger. So long as Christians are not aroused, the world will remain unmoved and unconcerned.

The scene of this parable has been the subject of many an artist's thought and endeavor. The realist, Tissot, has portrayed the two groups separately, painting the foolish virgins as sleeping together and the wise as awake and watching. One of the most pleasing and gorgeously painted canvases dealing with this subject is from the brush of Karl Theodor von Piloty, who was born in Munich, October 1, 1826, inheriting the pictorial faculty from his father, who was an engraver. He entered the academy at the age of twelve. When he was twenty-one he made a visit to Venice under the influence of an exhibition of the works of certain French artists, held in his native city. During his stay in Venice his admiration was especially aroused by the gorgeous magnificence of the productions of Paul Veronese,

who from that time had a dominating influence on Piloty's manner. Later he studied in Antwerp and in Paris, deriving his final educational acquisitions from those schools.

The contrast between his brilliant pigments and the cold coloring of Cornelius, then easily at the head of German art, gave Piloty immediate prominence on his return to his home, and at once he obtained a public commission. One year later, in 1855, he finished his "Seni before the Body of Wallenstein," now in the Pinakothek in Munich. Then followed "Nero among the Ruins of Rome," now in the museum at Budapest. Three years later came his "Galileo in Prison," which may be seen in the gallery at Cologne.

Shortly after the Civil War in this country, Piloty received an order from the American merchant, A. T. Stewart, for a painting representing "Thusnelda at the Triumph of Germanicus." Prior to the delivery of the picture in this country it was exhibited in Berlin with so marked effect that Piloty received a flattering offer to go to Berlin. However, by the persuasion of King Ludwig and an order for a replica of his Thusnelda, he was induced to remain in Munich. That replica or artist's copy may be seen to-day in the New Pinakothek in Munich; while the

original, happily for Americans, may be seen at the Metropolitan Museum in New York City.

In 1884 Piloty painted for the order of Miss Wolfe his only religious subject, "The Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins." The original is in the Wolfe Collection in the Metropolitan Museum. Thereafter the artist finished his "Under the Arena" and "The Council of Three in Venice," leaving incomplete his huge canvas, "The Death of Alexander," now occupying the wall of the staircase in the Berlin Museum, a marvel of gorgeous coloring so perfect in its unfinished state as to pique the scrutiny of the beholder, who gazes with wondering surmise to discover wherein the incompleteness consists.

As we look at the glowing canvas of Piloty, we perceive that he has chosen not the moment of sorrow and despair when the belated virgins are rejected from the door of the mansion, but the moment, tragic in its contrast of joy and of sorrow, when the announcement of the bridegroom's coming fills some with delight and others with dismay. In their yielding to slumber while the bridegroom delayed all had been alike, but from the moment of that midnight cry there is a difference. The wise, with joyous haste, begin to fill their lamps; the unwise, with nervous

perturbation, plead for oil to enliven the drooping flames.

We see them in all the varied action of joyful preparation, those wise virgins who had furnished themselves with a supply of oil. One is filling her lamp from the jar, another has just completed the task and is lifting her lamp above her head so that she can see the approaching procession; another, in the foreground, is shielding her lamp from the breeze, while her near companion bears her light above her shoulder and waves her palm-branch in smiling delight.

Then there is the somber side to the picture. One of the virgins in simple earnestness of beauty is kneeling in pathetic petition for help from her companion, who has not a drop of oil left after filling her own lamp. There is a sadness in the face of the wise virgin as with a gesture she gently tells the suppliant that she can not assist, that it were best to go and buy. Characteristic of a class of persons who yield quickly to despair, the artist has represented one of the maidens as flinging herself down upon the pavement, her face sunk upon one arm while the other hand grasps convulsively the cord of her girdle. Another is giving herself up to passionate grief, her hands pressed over her eyes; while, going away in the darkness, another is casting off her ornaments

and tearing her hair in frenzy of baffled hope. Yet another, with mantle-shrouded face, looks back at what she is losing, as she too, sorrowfully, hopelessly, goes away. In the despair and woe of the picture we have all the suggestion of the too late return and the stern exclusion at the inexorable door.

We look upon the picture and feel the solemn force of its somber teaching; but somehow we turn away again to the busy life which belongs to our every day, and in our hurry of occupation the impression fades away. The world goes on repeating that God is merciful. Yes, we are persuaded of that; but what has that to do with it? Man needs a reconstructed character, and a reconstructed character is not to be acquired by a brief period of passionate alarm, a readiness to give up what no longer is in our power, a confusion of excited pleading without a reversal of the habits of a self-centered life. It is not a question of God's willingness, but of man's fundamental impulse and inclination. It is admitted that all persons desire to enter into eternal gladness; but that is far apart from the question, the vital, hinging, determinative question: Can they take pleasure in the serene and stainless holiness of the Great White Throne?

In the house of a prominent citizen of Boston is a marble group representing the wise and foolish

virgins. The wise maiden is kneeling in the act of trimming her lamp, while the unprepared virgin is pleading with alarmed countenance for a share of the oil which is flowing from the jar into the burning lamp. But the provident virgin lifts her hand as if to guard her precious oil, expressing her refusal as plainly as if she had spoken. One day a noted New England essayist entered that parlor, and, standing with fixed gaze upon the eloquent marble, said judicially, "She should have given her the oil." That is the first thought of the modern man or woman, pondering that parable. The refusal seems to us heartless, born of a spirit far removed from that of the gentle Man of Sorrows.

But on the day when that remark was made by the man of letters, the owner of the marble replied to him: "If you and your neighbor have each signed a bill for a certain sum to fall due on a certain date, and you by dint of economy and perseverance have been able to lay by just enough to meet your own obligation, while your neighbor, wasting his hours on trifles, has made no provision for the day of settlement; and, if on the morning when the bills fall due, he should come beseeching you to give some of your money to help him pay his debt, would you give it to him?"

Yes, my friends, it is even more than that. Under

those conditions one might, from great love to a person held more dear than self, relinquish credit and incur bankruptcy to save him. I doubt not that in the awful wrestle of affection in the day of final doom, a mother for a son, a father for a daughter, a sister for her brother might say, "O God, let me go down in the place of my loved one." I have known such souls. Paul would do it for the people of Israel, whom he loved. But, friends, that can not be done. Even if God should grant it, still for the one Hell would be as Heaven, and for the other Heaven would be as Hell; for both Heaven and Hell are character, and place is but an accident, not the essence and center of life. The terrible fact is that men and women are choosing now, and attaining now, and the invisible line which severs this world from the next may be crossed without one throb of desire to change what has been so deliberately settled here.

How is it with you, my brother? If the Lord, who told us to be ready, should come this night; if at midnight you should hear the clarion cry, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh," would your heart thrill with ecstatic joy? Would you leap to meet Him, arms outstretched, face radiant, eyes alight with the gladness of welcome? That is what it means to be

ready, that is having the lamp trimmed and filled with oil.

It would be pleasant to flatter and say smooth things, but the true friend speaks the truth. I have known men who were secure in the days of their health and prosperity, who were cowed and horror-stricken in the day of sudden warning, brave as they had been before. I have known men to go out of this world without a moment of warning, unconscious from first to last. There is but one sane way, and that is to be ready.

To be ready means to be ready now, not to-morrow or any later day. But one thing will stand you in stead in the hour of your summons, and that is a real acquaintance and friendship with the God of Heaven. Is your life hid with Christ in God? Is your treasure in Heaven? Is your crown laid up in store to be brought forth with shouts of gladness in God's great day? Unless it be so with you, you indeed are all unready and unsafe. The years which lie behind you have been years of opportunity, of probation. This night your soul may be required of you. Be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh.

In his matchless "Idyls of the King," Tennyson tells of the singing of a sad and solemn song based on this parable, and of how the warning was heard

by one who had gravely sinned; the influence of that song and of noble words of forgiveness, we are told, so melted that sinning heart as to change the life, which became a life in Christ, beautiful and holy. The sinner became a saint, and thus at length was ready, when her summons came, to pass

“To where beyond these portals there is peace.”

God grant that by the power of the Holy Spirit the word spoken this evening may bring forth, in those who have heard this message, fruits of eternal gladness, the upspringings of eternal life.

X

CHRIST OR DIANA?



DIANA OR CHRIST? —Long

X

CHRIST OR DIANA?

“Who is on the Lord's side?”
Exodus, 32:26.

ALL men have heard of the battle of Hastings, in which William the Norman became the Conqueror of England; but to few does it occur that before William should conquer England it was first necessary that he should conquer Normandy. At the age of fifteen he assumed the title of duke with the usual bravery of warlike exploits; but two years later he found himself an exile, suing for royal aid against his rebellious vassals. He was twenty when he rode at the head of his loyal liegemen, having the king as his ally, to meet his foes in the battle of Val des Dunes. Aloof from both parties, surrounded by a troop of knights, a Norman lord was observed to be viewing the array of hostile forces as they drew up preparatory to battle. It was Raoult de Tesson, who had joined the insurgents in their rebellion and in the council of the chiefs had sworn

that he would be the first to strike the duke when the battle should be joined. However, as he regarded the opposing forces, he changed his mind; and, riding up to William, he pulled off his glove and struck the duke lightly on the shoulder, saying:—

“I swore to strike you, and I am quit; but fear nothing more from me.”

Men do not highly prize an allegiance so won; and yet a late repentance is better than no repentance at all; and better is repentance as the battle is joined, than submission when the battle is ended.

The issue in this world is clearly drawn, and the battle is on day after day. There is no neutrality possible. On the one side or on the other every human being takes his stand and wields his influence. In modern warfare exist what men call neutrals, who take no active part in the war; but as the world is drawn closer together it is felt that there is hardly a possibility of complete neutrality; that those who do not help, hinder. We all know that in science and handicraft there is what is called a right line, that is, a straight line. All others are not right lines. If you send your bank-book to be balanced, there are two possibilities as to the result: the figures entered as the balance are right or they are wrong. If one figure is wrong the balance is wrong, it can not accord with the books in the bank or with an accurate check-

book. There is no neutral possibility. It is right or it is wrong. I am persuaded that the rule which prevails in school and college that, tho the answers in examination may be wrong in part, the student may be passed to the next grade, has an unrecognized, yet clearly discernible, evil influence in the thought of the young people of this land. The inference prevails that in other things it is not essential to be perfect.

There is nothing more demoralizing and destructive in any walk in life, in any department of life, than the notion that it is not necessary to do perfect work. To have such a conviction is to fail. In the world-battle with sin there are two sides. One is the Lord's side, the other is not the Lord's side, whatever name it may bear. The Lord Christ has said: "He that is not with Me, is against Me." That draws the line straight through society; and whoever is not on one side is on the other. It were wise for us, therefore, to consider on which side we desire to be, to make sure on which side we now are standing. Which shall it be that you will choose, my friend? Which side is it that you are choosing?

I submit it to you as persons of intelligence that we should choose the Lord's side because it is the safe side. Wise men seek out safe foundations for their buildings and safe vaults for their securities

and safe men as their agents and safe roads for their journeys. A potent reason why we should choose the Lord's side is that it is the side which secures to us safety. In the book of Proverbs we read: "God is a shield unto them that put their trust in Him." Those who in the innermost thought truly accept the current motto, "Safety first," can not fail to choose the Lord's side. It is the safe side.

In one of his characteristic addresses, Dr. Francis L. Patton once put it thus:

"A man comes to me and says, 'You have been to Europe and can give me information as to ships.'

" 'I shall be glad to tell to you all I know. Come with me down to the docks. This is the steamer I crossed in. She is strong and staunch. She is clean, swift and dry. She has never had a mishap. Her captain is an old and skilful sailor. I advise you to sail in her. But here is her rival of another line in the adjoining dock. Her record is not good. She does not rate as A No. 1. She leaks like a sieve. She has had some sad mishaps. And her captain is a drunken and careless man. I do not advise you to sail in her.'

" 'Thanks; I will see you again and tell you my decision.'

"A few days later he calls again and says:

" 'Do you say that it is absolutely certain, beyond

the possibility of doubt, that the first steamer you showed me—the one you crossed in yourself—will carry me to Europe safely?’

“‘No, I said no such thing. I said that all the probabilities were in her favor as a safe vessel.’

“‘And did you say that it was positively certain the other vessel would go down with me in mid-ocean?’

“‘No, I said no such thing. I said that the probabilities were all against her as a safe vessel.’

“‘There is no positive certainty as to either vessel?’

“‘No, only strong probabilities.’

“‘Well, then, I shall take the second vessel.’

“‘Take it, if you will, and perish for your folly.’

“Even if there were no certainty for the religion of Jesus Christ, there is the strongest of strong probabilities in its favor; and to the man who rejects it because he demands positive certainty of its truth, and receives instead something which has not a thousandth part of the evidence in its favor, I say:

“‘Reject it, then, and perish for your folly.’”

Dr. Patton puts it only on the ground of high probability, relinquishing for the moment the position that we can be absolutely certain. God has no hesitation about it. When He speaks to man, He says: “Look unto Me, and be ye saved.” It is a sure thing. Once on the Lord’s side, we have no

occasion to fear the future. Our future is secure. Nothing can harm us. The condemnation is passed. The storm is over.

On the prairies, before the invasion of the farmers, after long droughts it frequently happened that the tall prairie grass took fire; and, driven by the winds, the flames began a wild chase over the sea of waving plumes. No horse could outstrip the fiery columns as they swept forward in their death-dealing charge. The hunter did not attempt the hopeless race. He stooped and lighted the grass about him, then stepped out on the charred, smoldering tract he had created; and, when the billows of the original fire approached, they raged about him vainly. He was safe, for where he stood, already fire had done its worst.

So it is, friends, with the man who has taken his stand on the Lord's side. The storm has passed already; and, so far as concerns the records of his sins, he has no reason for further fear. "They shall not be remembered" is the word of God as to them. So, therefore, my friend, if you desire to be rid of the wearing return of those old sins, God has provided a way in which they may be disposed of, and that is through the sacrifice of His Son. To all who come over to His side and engage in the warfare

against sin under the Captain of our salvation God has said:

“None of his sins that he hath committed shall be mentioned unto him.”

Is not that a condition worth having? Leave the position of danger and distress and uncertainty which you have occupied, and take your stand with the people of the Lord.

A second reason why we should choose the side of the Lord is that it is the winning side, it is the side which is triumphant. When Joshua was beginning his career as the leader of the armies of Israel, Jehovah said to him:

“This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein; for then shalt thou make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.” Whatever men may have to say about the matter, God holds out to us the truth that he who sides with God wins the day,—not the passing day merely, but the eternal day. One of the greatest blunders made in any age is the notion which some men entertain that to be on the Lord’s side is very convenient just before one goes out of this world, but for the strain of life here it is more advantageous to have Satan on our side. So, many postpone the acceptance of God’s

offer until some day when they shall stand in need of it. It is a huge blunder. "Godliness is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come."

It is related of Frederick the Great of Prussia that, on one occasion, he was ridiculing Christ and Christianity before a company of the nobles and generals. All were convulsed with laughter at the coarse wit of the king, except one brave man, who for some time remained sternly silent. It was Joachim von Zeitan, one of the ablest of the throng. At length he rose, and, shaking his gray head solemnly, he said to the king:

"Your majesty knows well that in war I have never feared any danger, and everywhere I have boldly risked my life for you and for my country. But there is One above us who is greater than you and I—greater than all men. He is the Saviour and Redeemer who has died also for your majesty and has dearly bought us all with His own blood. The Holy One I can never allow to be mocked or insulted; for on Him repose my faith, my comfort, and my hope in life and death. In the power of this faith your brave army has courageously fought and conquered. If your majesty undermine this faith, you undermine at the same time the welfare of your state. I salute your majesty."

The king regarded the brave Christian with admiration, and at once apologized to him for what had been said. That the side of the Lord is the winning side, was at that moment acknowledged by the greatest soldier of his day.

Every day, as it has been always, the demand is made of the world to choose, and choose at once, which leadership it will follow. There are two opinions among men in making choices: some aim to gain what seems to be the immediate advantage, others choose, as the saying is, that which will be best in the long run. Perception of values marks the grade of a man. Discernment of quality concerning a man's goal in life, his methods, his associates, his agents, is the secret of final achievement and success.

In the year 1829 there was born, in what was once the Roman city of Bath in England, Edwin Long, who in his boyhood had easy access to the classic porticoes of the ancient baths of the Romans, whose technical training as an artist was begun in England, supplemented at the age of eighteen by a visit to Spain to study that prince of realists, Velasquez, and by a later extended period of study in Egypt and Syria. His subjects cover a wide range—portraits, historical conceptions, Oriental sketches, Biblical characters such as Esther and Vashti, which

were produced in 1879; "Judith," and "The Flight into Egypt" in 1884—but perhaps his best-known production is "Diana or Christ," first exhibited in 1881.

The scene is a Roman amphitheater, a section of the tiers of spectators filling in the background. The middle-distance is occupied with legionaries and their standards. The tall statue of the goddess Diana, symbolic of fertility, appears against a sculptured column of the kind found among the ruins of her temple at Ephesus. Behind her are her priestesses, clothed in white, one with a double pipe ready to play. The aged priest, also in white, is seated just beyond the altar, attentive to the decision which may bring him a beautiful recruit for the temple. At the left of the picture, close to the altar, sits the magistrate, ready either to acquit or to sentence the Christian maiden, whose eyes are uplifted as if appealing to her Saviour in the heavens. At her left, behind, is the recorder, ready to jot down her decision, while at her right, close behind, is her pagan lover, urging her to save her life by taking a little pinch of incense from the box the seated priestess offers, and dropping it on the embers of the altar. Such a little thing to do. Her life is at stake. Refusal means a death of torture. How can she hesitate? Oh, the chaos of thought whirling in her terrified mind. What will

she do? Will she yield? or, as another witness for Christ once said, will she answer:

“I have that within me which makes me fearless”?

When we talk about the safe side there will come before the thought of many the memory of those who have gone down in blood because they chose the Lord's side. But remember, my friend, that there is a triumph other than the bivouac on the battlefield. They also triumph who are the unconquered in this world and the next. It is vastly more important to be safe in the next life than in this. Three score and ten, if you ever reach it, is a tiny fraction of eternity. At Marash, in Asia Minor, during the fearful Armenian massacres in 1896, was one young man who was required by the Turks to become a Mohammedan, with the alternative of death if he should refuse. He chose the Lord's side, and they struck off his head. His mutilated body was borne to his mother. Taking the bloodless hand in her own, she kissed it, and said:

“Rather so, my son, than living to deny our Lord and Saviour.”

A writer in *The London Christian* gave some time ago the following statement:

“Quite lately a large number of Russian criminals were standing in the courtyard of their prison, chained together, and about starting for their long,

sad journey into the Siberian wilds. Among them was one Christian man, a Stundist, sharing their banishment and punishment, simply because he had spoken to his fellow-workmen about the faith that had made him count all things as dross for Christ's sake. His fellow-prisoners were jeering him about it, saying:

"But you are no better off than we are. You are wearing the handcuffs as we do; if your God is of any use to you, why doesn't He knock off your chains and set you free?" The man replied:

"If the Lord will, He can set me free, even now."

At that moment a voice was heard, calling him by name, and telling him that a paper had just been received, granting him a full pardon. He was then told to stand aside and his chains were struck off. The prisoners were greatly awe-struck, and felt rebuked for their sneers. So is it, my friends, that in what way seems best to Him, our Lord gives His servants the victory.

The last reason we shall consider to-night is this: We should choose the Lord's side because it is the right side; and this is the best reason of all. Right and good are fast friends in this world of God. If we are to have that which is good, we must be on the side of right. If we are to have the happiness of God, we must have the character of God. The

reason is not that God refuses happiness to those who reject Him; but rather that rejection of God is proof of a disposition which is misery in itself, because in rejecting holiness man is choosing unhappiness. If there were nothing else to reckon with, conscience alone would make happiness an impossibility. Conscience may be silenced for a while. You can stop the escape of steam from the overheated boiler, for a time; but conscience can not be silenced for eternity; and the longer the silence, the louder the explosion. You have to reckon with eternity, to live throughout eternity, and eternity can be a happy continuance of life only as you have the character of God.

Long years ago they used to tell of a young woman who sat down to write the reasons why she should be on God's side, and, as she thought, her pen flew over the paper; but when she sought to write the reasons why she should not be on God's side, she could not think of one, and her pen lay idle upon her desk. God's side is the right side; and for you and for me that should be sufficient. Whatever is right ought to command our obedience, even if it were the losing side, which it is not; and even if it should be the unsafe side, which it is not. If right can not command us, then how can we find pleasure in the home of God?

To do right is reward in itself. To have a holy

character is sufficient happiness. But when once we begin to follow the leading of the Lord of life, the delights long desired come pouring in on us, and delights of which we have never dreamed spring up like beauteous wild flowers at every forward step. To do right is its own reward; but every other reward comes with it, and the Christian who marches in the van of victory is loaded with trophies of joy.

One night when the evangelist Mills was in the height of his usefulness, he visited the Pacific Garden Mission in Chicago, and there he saw three or four hundred men and women who had lost every noble mark of manhood and womanhood. There was a call for testimonies. A man came forward and leaned against the platform, a wreck of a man who might have been forty, and who might have been twenty; but sin had written itself in deep characters upon him, altho there seemed to be also a struggle for a new life. When he could control his voice, he told them that he had been one of the wickedest men in Chicago. On the previous Thursday night they had turned him out of the police station and told him not to come there again. He had sunk so low that he was not wanted even in jail; and he decided to put an end to his life. As he was passing the mission, they invited him to come in; and, deferring for the moment the act of suicide, he entered. He was

moved by the testimonies of men whom he had known in their wicked life. When an invitation was given for those who desired to become Christians to make it known, he rose and said:

“I am a desperate man; but if you think I am worth praying for, you can pray for me.”

From that moment a glimmer of hope came into his heart. The next night he rose and told his story, and the following night; and then he heard some of the men say that he was paid for telling it. Let me continue the account in the man's own words:

“To-night I want to tell you that you are right—I am getting paid for it. I wish you could have seen my boyhood's home. I lived in the best home that any boy ever had. I had a kind father . . . but I lied to him and I swindled him, and did all that was vile and mean that a young man could do, until at last he said to me:

“‘My son, will you do two things for me? If you will, I will never ask anything from you again.’

“I told him that I would. And he said:

“‘In the first place I want you to go away from home and never come back; and in the second place I would like to have you change your name. I do not want you to take my good name down into the depths where I fear you are going.’

“I told him that I would, and I left my home and

came to Chicago; and I have not heard my own name for three years. And I went down, down, down, until I looked into Hell. And I have a sister. My sister is so good and sweet that my foul lips ought scarcely to mention the fact of her existence. And my mother—my mother died of a broken heart because I was so wicked. But Friday morning I sat down and wrote to my father, and I said:

“‘Father, I do not ask you for money, and I do not ask you to take me back, but I do want to tell you that I feel that I have sinned against you, and I want to confess my sin and ask you to forgive me.’

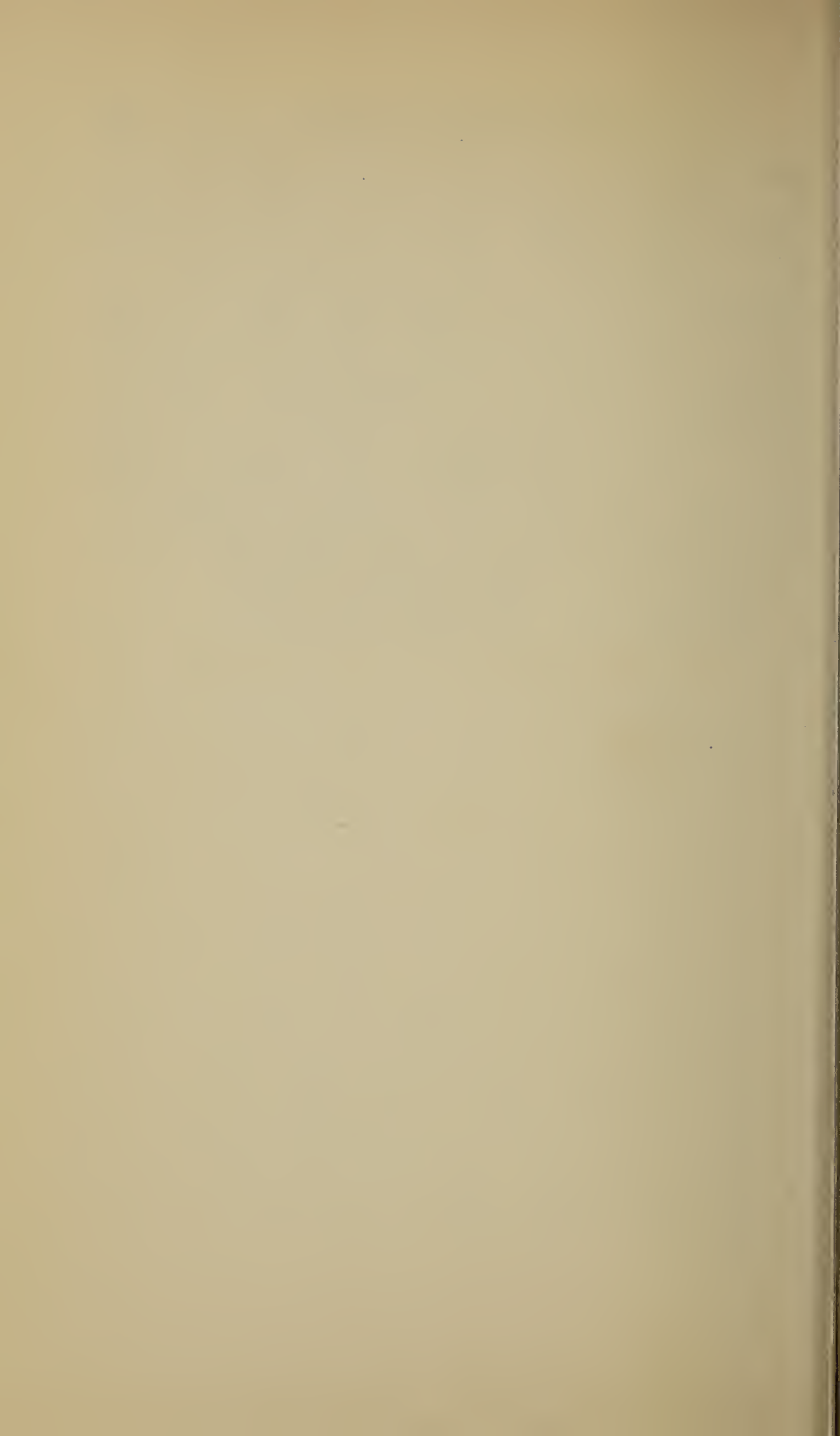
“I told him that I had confessed my sins to God, and that I believed He had forgiven me. And, boys, this morning I got these letters. And here’s a letter from my beautiful, sweet sister. I should have thought that she would have had to blot my foul image out of her heart long ago; but instead of that she says that she has prayed for me three times every day, and the best news she ever received in her life was the news that I am going to try to be good. And here’s a letter from my father, and my father says that he will forgive all my sins against him, and that he will forget the past, and that I can not come back too quickly to please him. And, boys, to-morrow I am going home. I have had the first quiet

night's rest that I have had in years; I have had the first moment's peace of conscience that I have ever known in all my life. O boys, I tell you that I am getting paid for it. I am getting paid for it."

Who is on the Lord's side? Who will turn to the home of his Father? Your Father in Heaven is longing to receive you into His family. He loves you, no matter how deeply you have sinned. He always has loved you. He has paid a princely price for you: and He comes to you to-night and He says:

"Come home. Come home, my child."

Will you come? Will you come now?



XI

THE CLEANSING OF THE TEMPLE





XI

THE CLEANSING OF THE TEMPLE

"Jesus entered into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple: and the blind and the lame came to Him in the temple: and He healed them."
Matthew, 21:12.

THE narrative of the life of Jesus of Nazareth moves with so vivid an action that those who have exercised to some purpose the gift of imagination have no need of an artist's aid to picture the events of that marvelous mission to man. From beginning to end there is motion, strong, vigorous, unceasing, stepping onward to a definite goal.

Twice in perusing the sacred narrative the reader comes upon an account of the cleansing of the Temple. Once at the outset of His ministry our Lord entered His Father's House to drive out the traders, that He might let the world know for what He stood in Israel. Then, after the years of His manifestation, as He knew that the end was approaching, He came again to the Holy House to emphasize the universality not only of His mission, but also of the

ignored and abandoned mission of the Hebrew race.

The Temple of Jehovah stood on the summit of a conspicuous hill, and it was surrounded by a colonnade or portico, which only Hebrews were allowed to enter. Round about this and on a lower level was a larger court surrounded by a colonnade, which was open to all persons, whether Jew or Gentile. It was known as the Court of the Gentiles; but the inner court was forbidden to the Gentiles by an inscription on the doorway, which warned all the uncircumcised that they entered on hazard of their lives. Travelers see that stone to-day in the museum at Constantinople.

This outer Court of the Gentiles was free to the men of all nations who desired to worship Jehovah. So long as they remained outside the people of Israel, this was the only part of the Temple where they could bow before Jehovah. This court was a reminder to the chosen people that they had a mission to all the world, that their Jehovah was the Lord of Hosts, the Creator and Maintainer of the round earth. It stood as a perpetual invitation to the nations, beckoning them to the worship of the Highest, and preparing them for a nearer approach when they should be persuaded to cast in their lot with the people of God.

In the city of Constantinople, close by the southern

end of the Galata Bridge, which spans the Golden Horn and connects the Turkish with the European quarter of the city, rises the Valideh Mosque, an uninteresting structure externally, within which the visitor sees what was formerly the Sultan's private pew in the galleries, where also he is delighted with the beauty of the stained-glass windows and the tile-covered walls. The chief object of interest, however, is the court of the mosque, which adjoins the Egyptian Bazaar. The traveler enters and strolls through the picturesque bazaar, shadowy and dim and crowded. He encounters a bewildering variety of commodities exposed for sale, without attempt at order or classification. There are sold meat and silks of Oriental brightness and old shoes and harness and silver-and gold-filigree and vegetables and old iron and flamboyant muslins and kitchen-ware. On you go along the crooked passages until you pass out into the light amid a tangle of booths and baskets and Turks and Nubians and Egyptians, interspersed with the inevitable and ubiquitous dogs and huddling, timid sheep. If now for a moment you dare to look up from the confusion at your feet, your eyes rest upon the pillars and cornices of the Valideh Mosque; and you understand that the holy place, the court of that mosque, which should be reserved for quiet, has been invaded by sordid commercialism.

It was into such a confusion of merchandise and clatter of voices that our Lord entered when He passed within the doors of His Father's house. In every way the intrusion of traffic was an offense to Him. It dishonored the house of Jehovah, and it was, in the proper sense of the word, sacrilege. Commerce had no place in such a building set apart for a holy purpose. Had the authorities been as sensitive to the dignity of their God as they were to the details of ceremonial, such a dishonor would have been sternly suppressed.

But beyond the indignity to the house of the Lord it was a wrong to man. The priests had their place of prayer, to which they alone were admitted. The Hebrews had their place of prayer, the inner court, which was guarded from all intrusion. The people of Israel might draw near to Jehovah's shrine, and in the quiet of the shady colonnade bow in meditation, in petition, and in praise. But the place which had been invaded was the outer court, the place of the Gentiles, the people of the nations. The word had come to Isaiah: "My house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples." The reverent Greek or Roman or Egyptian or Persian, who, in thankfulness and desire for blessings, should approach the shrine of Jehovah, must bow amid lowing of cattle and the clinking of coin. The Son of God might come to the

stable of an inn; but better things had been appointed for the sons of men. To invade the outer court of the Temple with merchandise, was to rob of their one place of approach and prayer the peoples to whom Israel should teach the good ways of the Lord.

This commercialism, therefore, struck directly athwart the Messiah's mission. He was a light to lighten the Gentiles, and it was thereby that glory should come to Israel. How should acquaintance with God ever become the possession of a world shut out to the tumult of a bartering market-place? Those slaves of greed were rendering decorous worship impossible; and thus they presented a selfish bar to the upward development of the world. They misrepresented the worship of Jehovah, and in addition hindered those who might have drawn nearer to the great God of nations.

But beyond the outrage done to the Gentiles, these men were extortioners and cheats. Their business was not conducted on an honest basis. They were favored with a sort of monopoly, inasmuch as the would-be purchaser could not return to his own town or city to purchase, nor could he well drive his cattle or carry his poultry so great a distance. Taking advantage of these conditions, those men charged exorbitantly for what might by courtesy be called an accommodation. Those who came to the courts of

Jehovah encountered an exhibition of greed and knavery.

For such reasons our Lord regarded these men as offenders to be driven from the sacred house. There seems not to have been the slightest opposition to His peremptory command to evacuate the place of prayer. Such was the power of conscience and such the dignity and impetuosity of His manner, that the guilty men fell away before Him, leaving the overturned tables and the litter of hay and straw to speak of the disorder which had polluted the house of God.

This action of our Saviour in clearing the Temple is one of the most remarkable in all His significant life. It stands with a few other incidents such as the blasting of the fig-tree, His warnings to the Pharisees and scribes, and His look of indignation toward those men who grudged healing to the sufferer on the Sabbath day. With all the gracious tenderness and winsome sympathy, with all the patience and condescension, with all the quick discernment of penitence in the despised and outcast, there is another side to His character. There should be a large modification of our thought of Him in the direction of inflexible insistence on abandonment of sin, the declaration of no compromise with anything lowering the worth and purity of the service of God. Across the gates of

pearl He writes in letters of flame: "There shall in no wise enter any thing that defileth." And He means it. The life which enters that pearly portal must be pure as His wind-drifted snow, sifting from His spotless hand. He came to save His people from their sins; and clinging to sin is clinging to destruction. There is no concord between light and darkness; and there never can be. His forgiveness, His tenderness, His outstretched hand—these are not for the self-righteous or the sin-satisfied, but only for the penitent and the sin-sick, the men and women wounded and fettered of Satan, who cry to Him to break their chains.

Yes, my friends, with all His gentleness He is firm, with all His stooping to uplift man, there was no stooping to sin or impurity or tolerance of evil. Kind to the penitent and the weakly erring, He was stern to the arrogant and the headstrong. There was nothing of the double life in His career. There was no yielding to the hypocrite. What He was then, He is now; for He is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. He is preparing for His own a Home in Heaven; and He will have men to know in all seriousness that there is an inside and an outside to that Home. There is to be no repetition of this incomplete and unsatisfactory world. The lovers of purity are not to be forever distressed with the

manners of the vile. The eternal worship of service is not to be broken and marred by the intrusion of the selfish and the sordid. Heaven could not be Heaven unless there were an outer region, name it what you will.

Frank Kirchbach was born in London in the year 1859. He studied in the great art centers of France and Germany, coming under the influence of Munkacsy, who dominated his style. In 1895 he received honorable mention at the Paris Salon. The subject from his brush best known in America is that entitled, "Christ Casting out the Money-Changers," the coloring of which shows the influence of Munkacsy. Looking at this masterly essay in color, the beholder perceives the figure of the Christ standing at the outer doorway of the Temple, surrounded by a skillfully grouped company of men, women and children. He can hardly fail to notice that the architecture of the building demands that a massive pillar, corresponding to the dark column toward the right of the scene, should occupy the corner of the platform or stylobate which reaches forward to the immediate foreground of the composition. It is evident that the portico would fall without such a support, and yet it is evident that such a pillar would completely obliterate the figure of our Lord. What is the meaning of it?

The intelligent art student at once recognizes that this is a device of Giotto and the primitives to permit the beholder to see what was doing within a house or behind some obstruction. The artist has ignored the exigencies of architecture to broaden the view and include all the varied and complicated events connected with this outstanding action of the Redeemer of men.

Regarding, therefore, the picture of Kirchbach, the observer perceives greed and violence and self-seeking and futile defiance and inveterate adherence to wrong-doing. These, with all else that goes to make this world the sorry failure it is, unquestionably have no part in the house of His Father.

Love is tender and Love is terrible. In all its self-esteem, yet has the twentieth century need to tremble. Love of the holy is detestation of the unholy. The stronger the love, the hotter the hate. In these days we are so self-complacent, so good to ourselves as the saying is,—in reality cruel to ourselves. These are days of ease, days of miscarriage of justice, of immunity from detection, and even of liberty to practise fraud. The artist has set forth the true basis of exclusion, the power which bars the unholy from entrance within the jasper walls. Before the majestic face of the Holiest no lover of sin can abide. The whole process of the day of judg-

ment conducts itself within the human soul, and it is by the verdict of conscience each individual is assigned to the existence for which in the substructure of character each has been choosing for himself. When will the world understand those pregnant lines of Whittier?

“No word of doom may shut thee out,
No wind of wrath may downward whirl,
No sword of fire keep watch about
The open gates of pearl;

“What if thine eye refuse to see,
Thine ear of Heaven’s free welcome fail,
And thou a willing captive be,
Thyself thine own dark jail?

“O doom beyond the saddest guess,
As the long years of God unroll
To make thy dreary selfishness
The prison of a soul.”

Men think that they will be brave to face the throne of gleaming light. They are strong to-day to turn from that face of holy brightness. One day they shall gaze upon it, and know that the holiness shining there is not what they have chosen for themselves. The life that goes on within the City of Gold is not what they want in the least. In that day when

they have dropped the flesh, they still will have retained the spirit, for they are spirit; and the will of that spirit of theirs has been choosing something utterly different from the stainless life of the purified people of God. In the passion of their despair they may wreak their fury on those about them, as wretched as they. The artist has thought of that. In the foreground of the picture you may see the oppressor who is overcoming his neighbor in the struggle for gold. Doubtless the agony of the lost in the other world is in no small part inflicted by their fellow-sinners. The world of darkness needs no fiends or furies with flaming torches and serpent-headed scourges. The hardness of unrestrained humanity let loose to wreak its Satanic malice were scourge enough. Man makes his own Hell. At the gate of Heaven stands the Redeemer of men to receive His own; but those who will have none of Him here and now will desire Him as little in that day. There shall in no wise enter in any thing that defileth. None such has any wish to force his way past that form of light. It is not so much that He sends them away. They go away. For the occupations of that home of holiness they have not the least desire.

Look again at the picture. You may see to the right of the projected pillar the faces of members of the Sanhedrin, who, when the rabble is gone, will

come to Him, not to thank Him for His service to religion in cleansing the sacred courts, but to demand of Him by what authority He has thus rebuked their laxness of administration. They are massed together to attract the beholder's attention and meditation. They, of all men, received from the Saviour of men the saddest, sternest word. Whether they shall ever enter those courts of brightest beauty beyond the skies is contingent on their turning from the sham to the genuine, from the covering to the core, from the clothing of religion to the throbbing heart.

But there is another side to the picture. The narrative tells us that there came to Him in the Temple the blind and the lame and the children. The purified house of His Father at length had room for those who felt their need and reached out to the attraction of His personality. Now note well, my friends, that the same face which seemed terrible to the unrepentant, seemed tender to the penitent. The house which is in the heavens is kept pure, that those who are weary of defilement may enter and find peace. The picture represents such approaching the Master; and their approach is made possible by the exclusion of the others. We see the lame, the suffering, the poor, pausing on the steps by the wall of the Temple, not yet thronging into the space left vacant by the departing merchants. If those men of wealth

whom the less fortunate may have envied in times past, are to be excluded, is it any wonder that the unfortunate should question whether there be any standing for them? They linger as if hardly daring to believe that they are welcome.

In the very center of the picture, about the feet of the Messiah, and approaching Him with hope and with jubilation, are the mothers and the children; and beyond them are those who are hailing Him with exultant gesture and voices; while behind Him, shrinking against the lofty wall, falters one, longing for His word of pardon, yet fearing to draw nearer, dreading an indignant rejection, such as she may have received from some self-complacent teacher of the law. Can there be hope that He, who will make no compromise with the merchants of the Temple, may yet speak in kindness to the defiled and the out-cast? So she stays her arm against the wall, not turning to look at His face, and there she waits.

I am persuaded, my friends, that even before He lays His hands on the heads of the children, before she could have a chance to slip away, that kingly face will turn toward her, and those eyes so patient will look into hers, and she will hear the words: "Daughter, thy sins be forgiven thee. Go, and sin no more."

The Lord Christ stands, as you see Him, every day before the vision of the world; and some go from

Him in indifference or dislike or hate; and some draw near to challenge and to crucify. But some flock about Him in peace and joy, and some falter forward, almost fearing repulse. As the eyes of your soul look out to Him, what is the emotion of your heart toward that kingly Presence? The decision lies wholly with you. He will never force any one into His palace of glory; but He will never send any away. What you do with regard to Him determines all your future life for blasting or for blessing. There He is standing. What will you do to-night?

XII

CATHEDRAL BUILDERS



XII

CATHEDRAL BUILDERS

"Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not unto men: knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ."
Colossians, 3:23.

THE Christian system is designed to develop the highest virtues, to create a society perfect in the interrelations of its individual members, every man growing in personal beauty and living in delightful harmony with all his fellows; such is the natural outcome of the teachings of the Man of Galilee.

It has been one of the blunders of the present generation to think that character can be independent of belief. Belief has in all ages proved its power to mold character. The ideals of a nation influence vitally the development of the national type. The conceptions of art, of industry, of business honesty, of responsibility—in fact, the whole life-ideal—affects fundamentally the type of work and act and attitude, not only among individuals, but, whenever the conception is racial or national, it affects the entire

race or nation in its output of thought and action and labor.

We may do what our hands find to do with all our might, and yet do it badly. If our notion of work be faulty, the outcome can not be otherwise than imperfect. There were little profit and large detriment in working with an erroneous conception of what one should aim to accomplish. The modern notion concerning work too often is a warped and ignoble idea, fundamentally unsound and vicious.

There were times when men had nobler ideals, and the output of work was of a widely different quality. The contrast has been well stated by Dr. Franklin H. Giddings, Professor of Sociology in Columbia University, in a monograph on "Sociology and Political Economy." In that paper he says:

"For the medieval mind the supreme embodiment of wealth was the cathedral, a structure not for the individual but for man; a structure in which centered the pride and devotion of high-born and low alike, and into the building of which nothing but perfect materials and perfect workmanship might enter. By this ideal trade was controlled and labor organized. Cheapness was not a good. Fidelity, painstaking, the patient achievement of perfection, were the industrial virtues, and by them the artisan was lifted up into a truly noble life. His guilds were associa-

tions for something more than organized resistance, and men and masters mingled in fraternal fellowship. To-day," continues Dr. Giddings, "the characteristic sign of the popular notion of wealth is cheapness. We demand abundance rather than quality. If commodities are cheap, we do not always inquire, as Mr. Ruskin would have us, whether the money we save is the outcome of action that created, or action that has annihilated ten times as much. Business is debased. The moral sentiment pervading any trade is forced down, as Professor Adams has shown, 'to the level of that which characterizes the worst man who can maintain himself in it.' The medieval conception of wealth found the workman a serf and raised him to freedom. The modern conception of wealth found him a freeman; it has forced upon him the conviction that he must now protect his freedom by measures of defensive war."

Now, evidently, even at present, this is affecting the whole character of modern production and even of religious thought. The methods of working and the rules of business which men accept have a direct influence on their conceptions of the right and wrong of things, affect their estimate of the values of basal principles. In consequence of its accepted canons of trade, the modern world is becoming poisoned in the very springs of action. When the great idol, Sham,

is enthroned in the temple of men's hearts, no place is left in the temple for the King of Heaven.

Every man should be a cathedral builder in the sense that his aim should be to give complete faithfulness of service. His labor should be as if he expected it to witness to his fidelity in the sight of all the world, in the sight of God. His work should be done as if under the master's eye, in all steadiness of working and all perfection of finish. It is to be regretted that such is not the aim of multitudes of workers to-day. Such is not the modern spirit. The laxity and unfaithfulness run through all classes and conditions of men. No one class of workers need boast themselves as wholly free from the contamination of the sordid temper of the present age.

The propriety of industrial organization need not be questioned. The benefits gained by organization can not be denied. The only regret that the wise have in connection with trade organizations, whether of employer or of employed, is that they have not always been discreetly guided, that the unwisdom of the leaders has often injured a good cause, that certain tendencies of policy have a debasing effect on the worker, as certain other tendencies of policy have a debasing effect on the employer. One of these tendencies has a relation to our subject this evening. The attempt to limit the amount of work will seem some

day, even to those now insistent upon it, a source of damage. The outworking of the unnatural principal is the degradation of the worker by substituting an ignoble for a noble purpose. I am aware that certain necessities of industrial warfare have created this condition of things, but that does not lessen the harmfulness of this unnatural principle. The application of it even in economics has been injurious to the welfare of the worker. Restriction of output has driven work from England to America, and now American workmen favor a policy which tends to drive work away from America. There are thousands of ill-paid and unpaid workmen the world over who would be glad to obtain orders which such a policy is diverting from our shores. Ex-President Eliot of Harvard called attention to the nature of such limitations. He said:

“The doctrine of the unions which I consider the most unwholesome of all their doctrines is the limitation of output. I saw a few days ago several masons laying a brick wall, a long brick wall, which was four bricks thick. They laid up the outer row on one side, then the outer row on the other; and then there are two bricks to be put in all along the wall, between the outer rows. With their trowels they threw a quantity of soft mortar into this space, and then proceeded to fill in the bricks. The mortar was already in place and the problem was to pick up bricks from

the floor of the staging and squeeze them into the mortar. I noticed that they held their trowels in one hand, stooped down, and with the other hand picked up one brick at a time, or in many cases, only half a brick, and put them into the soft mortar on the wall. It was perfectly evident that they were wasting a great deal of time; for they might as well have picked up two bricks for each stooping, had they not held their trowels in their hands. That illustrates perfectly the really hideous nature of the limitation of output as prescribed by trade unions. The limitations are very various, but they always produce one result—the reduction of the efficiency of the worker by prescribing that he shall not work with a good will. I do not know any more deplorable, demoralizing practise than this. It is absolutely rotting to the individual's fiber.”

President Eliot goes on to show that the thing which the public condemns in the combinations called trusts, is the same spirit which is actuating the leaders of the present labor movements; the motive is to seize and hold a monopoly, and that attempt, President Eliot prophesies, will end in failure, because it is hostile to the American spirit.

We are not now concerned with the economic phases of this question. What I desire to impress on your minds is the conviction that a base method

will teach a low aim in life, will lower the moral tone of the man, will make him less Christian; in fact, will take out of him the spirit of Christ, and place within him the spirit of fraud and extortion, the spirit of the lower world.

Some years ago a well-known photographer of New York City had extensive repairs made upon his country house. When the bill for work on the roof was presented, the owner of the house protested that the charge was exorbitant for the amount of work done. The roofer, however, spoke of the number of days consumed in the work, and said that the men must be paid for their time. Then the photographer laid before the employer a number of photographs which he had taken of the men from a position which commanded a view of the roof. Some of the men were smoking, some were reading newspapers, some were lying on their backs.

"Why!" exclaimed the roofer, "those are my men."

"Exactly," replied the house-owner, "and these pictures explain why they took so long a time over the job."

Strange as it might appear, that method would not serve to-day. A man in New York City who was desirous of hastening the work on an office-building which was nearing completion, on going through the

rooms, came on a number of plumbers sitting at a game of cards at about three o'clock in the afternoon. The owner of the house expostulated with them, saying that every day that building was unfinished meant a heavy loss to him, and demanding why they did not work to the end of the eight-hour day.

"Oh," said they, "we have wiped four joints to-day, and that is all the union allows for a day's work."

Friends, the conscience of this age is becoming demoralized, and there are those in this land who can see nothing amiss in such a condition of affairs.

But let us not imagine that the defective morality is confined to the trade unions. The public has become aware that faithfulness is not always characteristic of all business houses. The remark has been frequently made of late years that prices have been rising and quality falling, and that, when prices have been reduced, quality was reduced also. The purchaser for a large establishment remarked some months ago to a salesman who was soliciting an order for electric-light bulbs:

"It's a marvel that some one can't invent a filament that will burn for a reasonable time. These things give out without the slightest warning, and very few last long. They are not nearly so good as the old kind."

"Oh, no," replied the salesman, "we can make

filaments that will last as long as the old kind, but we haven't the slightest notion of doing it. What we're selling is as good as we care to make."

How far this unsoundness penetrates society may be judged by the fact that a convict once complained that the public sent him to prison because he was dishonest; and there he was set to work to cut out paste-board to put inside the soles of shoes to give them the appearance of thick leather and so deceive the purchaser. That surely was a most extraordinary way of reforming criminals; but it indicates how far the demoralization has extended in this land of the free and home of the brave.

Now let us think of something pleasant.

The river Po is the largest stream in Italy, having about the same length as the Hudson, 390 miles, descending from a height of 6,000 feet above the sea-level, and carrying in its flow as great a body of sediment as our king of waters, the Mississippi. Where the broad and beautiful upper valley of the Po spreads green from the whiteness of the Alps to the blueness of the Apennines, in the very center of Lombardy, lies Milan, the city of the Visconti and the Sforzas, the city of that stately ruin, "The Last Supper" of Leonardo, the city of Sodoma and Luini and Bramante. In the very heart of the city, situated on a broad square, stands the cathedral, a fairy frost-

forest, an Aladdin's palace of Alpine marble, one of the modern wonders of the world.

A representation of this dream-church presents its suggestions to us this evening. Who was the architect of this marvelous building no one has been able with certainty to discover. An art-critic writes of it:

"That of Milan is imposing in size, and utterly bewildering and complex in its sculptures. It was founded in 1386 by Gian Galeazzo, Duke of Milan, in expiation of his crimes and in thanksgiving for their success. Historians dispute as to whether its plans proceeded from German or Italian artists. But at the first sight of it one is inclined to dismiss all such discussions, and to believe that genii of the Arabian Nights have suddenly turned a vast, shining marble quarry into a hill forest of statues; for all its white exterior and every pinnacle and point of its roof are thronged with statues, multitudinous and motionless, that seem to have just alighted from the skies, and to be silently looking toward the distant Alps. Five hundred years have they been in gathering their thousands, and their host is not yet complete."

Every part of this building is covered with marble except the ceiling of the interior. Even that sloping roof is composed of slabs of white marble. And the statues—Who could tell of them? More than two

thousand adorn the exterior, omitting the many within. Wander about the curious labyrinth of passages on the roof, and in all the obscure and least expected of places, you are confronted by some statue or group of statues. I climbed to the top of the transept and down to the roof beyond, and strolled to the end of the structure, and, as I began to climb again, there, behind a pile of pinnacles, such as you see on the corner presented to your view, I found a life-size group of human figures in marble, well worthy of studious contemplation.

Such was the ideal of what work ought to be, as entertained by a generation which we affect to despise. Every window on both sides of the building has eight statues in the tall niches of its beveled opening, and four others on the sides of the great buttresses flanking the windows. The vast windows in the apse at the farther end of the cathedral, beyond the spire, are the largest windows in the world.

But that ideal was not confined to Italy. As the tourist passes from one to another of the magnificent cathedrals on which has been lavished the wealth of human affection and devotion, he might suppose that such excellence would be rewarded with the highest remuneration. If, in these days, the attempt were made to erect edifices such as those, we should expect labor contests disgracing and retarding the progress

of the work; and the highest wages that could be wrung out of the pockets of the donors would be exacted for those who should be engaged in the task. The workmen of those days, skilled as our workmen rarely are skilled, received wages which to us are amazing, even when the difference in prices between our day and theirs is considered. The men who erected the Cathedral of Amiens, the church in France which marks the perfection of the Gothic style, were certainly not pampered by the patrons. Their aim was not money, but excellence. The matchless oak-carving was executed by two men who labored for fourteen years, receiving for their incomparable artistry about seven cents a day. Few of the workmen who toiled on the cathedral received more than twenty-five cents a week during the time of the erection. The value of money was greater in those days, and neither workmen nor donors lived in the luxury of the twentieth century workman; but the product of those fourteen years could not be reproduced by the artisans of to-day. Is it not evident that largeness of remuneration is not the basis of excellence of execution?

Now let us not miss the instruction of this study. What is to be regretted is not that the present-day worker has a larger return than those of any preceding age of the world; but that the spirit of to-day is

a grasping spirit which seeks for more wages whether earned or not, and neglects the skill and faithfulness which would bring return without warring for it. If the basis of payment were not what can be extorted, but what has been fairly earned, a pleasanter relation would exist in many establishments; such a relation as I can well remember in my earlier years, such a relation as exists to-day in some industrial activities. When we entered a store in Berlin some years ago, to receive a piece of ivory-carving which had been ordered, the proprietor placed a package on the show-case, excused himself for a moment, went to the rear room to call the assistant who had wrought that work of art, and they stood together to enjoy the words of appreciation which they knew must follow the opening of the wrappings and the sight of that thing of beauty. Master and man joined in the transaction in a fellowship such as should always be.

Never can the world become truly a noble world until the purpose underlying all production becomes once again excellence of output and not largeness of return. There exist multitudes in the world to-day who seek to do faithfully and well that which is confided to them, and they are the trusted and the rewarded to-day. Among the slovenly and the slothful they are busy while others are unappreciated. I

knew a man in a city where I lived for years, who always did his work well, always well. It was difficult to obtain him for a job. He was busy all the time. The same concern employed a number of others. It was always possible on short notice to obtain one of them. After they had finished the job according to their notions, and had gone, frequently I found it necessary to demand that the man who knew and who did faithful work should come to remedy their blunders.

Moreover, I observe that whenever I find a man of that kind, he is in request. He has no days of idleness, for the world prizes faithfulness, and is ever ready to reward it. There is something better than money-getting, and that is a task worthily done. There are some men and women who are not trying to screw all they can get out of society; if it were not so, the world would be a much worse world than it is. Some of them do not receive very much of their reward in money, but they receive what is better, the satisfaction of seeing Satan's kingdom invaded and his power curbed.

Even in the sordid society in which we live, this principle is acknowledged. The wise man values it and seeks to secure it. When ex-president Eliot was a tutor in college, there was offered him the position of superintendent in a manufacturing company at a

salary of \$5,000. He declined the offer, and a few weeks later accepted a professorship in the Massachusetts Institute of Technology at a much smaller salary. Not long thereafter the president's chair of Harvard University became vacant. His friends in that corporation looked on him as the fittest man for the place; and so he came to the position which he graced so well and so long. They were not looking for manufacturing superintendents; they were looking for a man who esteemed his profession above mere money-getting.

Examples might be multiplied to weariness. There is something which is finer and stronger than money, something which will buy more and win a larger following, and that is character. Moreover, the finest character, the strongest and most winsome, is that which has learned of the Saviour of the world. These are days when doctrine is decried, and the world is the weaker for it; for strong doctrine makes strong men and women. The Covenanters of Scotland were fed on oatmeal, the Catechism, and the Bible; and they were the toughest martyrs persecution ever tried to trample.

A young man, born of the stout Puritan stock which came to Massachusetts Bay in 1630, was a student in Williams College in the fifties of the last century. With a number of college mates he

clambered up the slopes of Greylock to spend the night in the mountain-top. They had their songs and stories about the campfire that evening; but, before the company broke up for the night, this young man drew from his pocket a Testament, and said:

“Boys, it’s my habit to read a chapter in the Bible and have a prayer before going to bed. Shall we have it together?”

The others acquiesced; and in the shadows of that mountain-top the classmates knelt together under the stars.

The college days passed over, and the young man married and entered the legislature of his native State. When the Civil War broke over the country, he was among the first to go to the front, where by his ability and bravery he was advanced to the position of brigadier-general. The war dragged itself to its long-deferred close. The land was filled with rejoicing; and then there came the shock of assassination, and the nation bowed in tears. On that morning of horror and suspense a great assembly gathered in the wide gap between the commercial buildings at the junction of Broad and Wall streets, in New York City. Then, when the tension of excitement was at its climax, the Christian general, perceiving the need of a firm utterance to steady the minds of men,

stepped to the edge of the Treasury platform, where he stood in full view of the swaying thousands, and, with a voice which had been heard above battle-fields, spoke these words:

“Fellow citizens, clouds and darkness are round about Him: justice and judgment are the habitation of His throne. God reigns, and the Government at Washington still lives.”

Was it strange that such a man should be chosen by this nation to stand at the head of affairs? That man came to the President's chair as the youngest President this land had known until that day. The nation remembers him as James A. Garfield; and those who know his story can understand that the character displayed in his younger days had formed the foundation of the distinction to which at length he came.

A cathedral builder, pure and strong and true, in the might of the Highest, such let it be our ambition to become, living to produce that which is fine and strong and beautiful and lasting for the good of the world and the glory of our God. And our reward? It were reward sufficient to be such a person and to have done such a work. Why need we think of reward? Do right and leave the rest to God.

XIII

THE ACID TEST



XIII

THE ACID TEST

"His countenance fell at the saying,
and he went away sorrowful."
Mark, 10:22.

THERE is a prevalent notion that living a respectable life should be a guaranty of happiness in the world to come. By respectable the better class of people mean honest, chaste, temperate, truthful, law-abiding, courteous. This popular characterization does not necessarily involve faultlessness in any one of the phases of life just now mentioned. Unless I have vastly misconceived the popular notion, occasional lapses from the strict following of these virtues would be regarded as pardonable, for the world does not discover the perfect man.

One reason why so many persons in these days are careless concerning attendance at church is that they are persuaded of the rationality and validity of this prevalent conviction, and they do not regard

church life as essential to their well-being here or hereafter. It is easy to say that they are not accurately informed, but the excessive emphasis on divine love and the almost total suppression or mention of divine justice and divine indignation have much to do with the popular fancy. Moreover, the indifference of multitudes of church members with reference to church attendance gives countenance to the neglect of those who are without.

All this loose and easy teaching is said to be Christian, and to be derived from the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ. In regard to the inflexible necessity of obedience to duty and the consequences of neglect, it would seem as if the majority of modern persons are willing to permit themselves to be cheated. In the face of the solemn assertions of science as to persistency of character, in spite of the stern warnings of revelation, men seize upon any pretext, however flimsy, upon any shadow of an argument by which they may be encouraged in fragmentary righteousness. The world has always been such. This is merely the modern phase of the sad truth.

Our text is taken from the Gospel of Mark, the most vivid of the Gospels in the portrayal of details. Papias, who lived in the latter part of the first century and the beginning of the second, is reported

to have said that Mark obtained his knowledge of the life of Christ from the apostle Peter. Mark gives us little details of the various scenes he narrates, with greater fulness than the other evangelists. In the story of the rich young man, Mark presents three exclusive items, each having a value in interpreting its meaning.

This young man came to our Saviour in all the eagerness of impetuous youth. Mark says that he came, running. Here was the kind of young man which every one loves to see, alert, rosy, eyes bright, face beaming, all the joy and spring of life strong within him, free from care, possessed of the power of personality and the power of wealth. To him life was all sunshine.

He asked his question in all the honesty of young manhood, and it is noteworthy that our Lord, in answering him, referred only to the second portion of the Law, that which relates to our fellow men. In all candor the young man replied: "All these things have I kept from my youth up. What lack I yet?" There was no chamber of horrors and shamefulness in this young man's life, no skeleton in the closet. The Saviour asked no searching question to bring a blush to his cheek. He was a youth of pure, honorable, commendable life.

This incident in the life of our Lord attracted the

thought of a modern German master, Johann Michael Heinrich Hofmann, an artist singularly successful in his handling of the episodes of our Saviour's life and the delineation of His features. Hofmann was born in the city of Darmstadt on the 19th of March, 1824. At the age of eighteen he studied in the Düsseldorf Academy under Schadow. After extensive travel, he chose Munich as a place of residence, but soon moved to Frankfort on the Main, and thence to Dresden. From 1854 to 1859 he studied in Rome. In 1862 he settled in Dresden, where he remained until his death. In 1868 he was elected an honorary member of the Art Academy, in which from 1870 to 1894 he taught as a professor.

His home in Dresden stands on a side street near to the chief railway station. It is an unpretentious building close to the sidewalk, having a garden at the sides and back. We were invited to ascend to the second story, to the artist's studio, which consists of two rooms looking out on the garden. There were three pictures in the first room. On an easel opposite the door was the original of his famous picture, "Christ and the Rich Young Man," a copy of which appears at the head of this chapter. This painting the artist held in his own possession until his death, no one having offered him a sufficient sum to induce him to part with it. In the same room, on another

easel, was a head of Christ painted on canvas, which was Hofmann's ideal of the Christus. It differs materially and spiritually from the head of Christ generally known in this country as Hofmann's "Head of Christ," which is merely a detail from the picture we are treating. This figure, facing the young man, presents Christ in a moment of intense earnestness. That is the Christ of a mood and a moment; but the Christus is the eternal Christ, absorbing into itself all the characteristics of the God-man who created the worlds, who became flesh, who endured the contradiction of sinners, who bowed in Gethsemane, who suffered on the cross, who rose from the dead, who is seated on the right hand of God, who is directing the Christian centuries, who is coming to judge the world. There are the gentle eyes which won the children, the sympathetic eyes which comforted the mourners, the pure eyes which put to shame the wicked, the quiet eyes which see through the shams and falsities of men, through the long stretch of the ages, through the sifting of the nations, beyond the crash of the final catastrophe, into the clear, calm triumph, the eternal reign of peace.

One other picture was in that first room, the Lord Christ bowing in Gethsemane. The artist demanded for it seven thousand dollars. As we stood and gazed at that tragic canvas, with its Rembrandtesque lights

and shadows, with its poignant message for the ages, it seemed an easy thing to pay down that seven thousand dollars, thus securing to America that priceless treasure, and to part with it later to some multi-millionaire who would boast of the only specimen of the Hofmann dear to every American household, the only production of his in America.

I sometimes wonder why I did not make the venture; but a venture outside of one's own business borders on speculation, and the canvas remained on its easel. In the second chamber were two secular paintings and eight sketches of the scenes in the life of Christ by which Hofmann will long be gratefully remembered. The maid who opened the door presented the artist's apology for not receiving us himself, as he was quite ill. Indeed, it was his last illness; for a few months thereafter he passed away.

That the artist had made a careful study of the rich young man becomes evident on a close inspection of his work, even in a copy. The addition of color greatly increases the vividness of the effect. As we looked at the picture in Hofmann's studio, we observed that the toga, or cloak, over the young man's shoulders was of a creamy whiteness, ornamented by a richly embroidered border. The sleeve and the body of his tunic were of a Nile green. The turban was a deep red, and it was wrapped at the lower edge

with a rich scarf, shot through with threads of gold. Apart from his apparel, one might at once perceive that his hands showed that neither he nor his ancestors had ever done any hard work. At the very first glance any one would say that he was a young man of wealth and of wealthy descent.

Christ also was presented as a young man, about thirty years old. He came of the royal line of Israel. The artist therefore gave Him the distinction of a long thumb; and, tho His hands are larger than those of the rich young man, they are not coarse. Contrast there is, however, and it appears in the clothing of the Master, which is unadorned and plain. His red tunic is without an ornamental border, and so also is the deep blue toga, falling from His right shoulder and encircling His body. As we gaze upon the canvas, we are impressed with the thought that the power and charm of the Saviour are not assisted by any of the accessories of expenditure. He is the Master by force of His peerless personality. By this picture we are reminded also that "even Christ pleased not Himself," that He never repelled a poor man by the super-elegance of His dress. We can hardly fail to observe that there is a wide difference between His life and spirit, and that of the young man who asked for His instruction.

There is something in wealth which gives the

possessor an advantage over those less favored. The beginnings of wealth are difficult: but the increase of its power is rapid to amazement. In these days we are apt to speak of money, rather than of wealth, because money is the most general, and the most easily converted, form of wealth; but the same law is true of all possession of property: possession makes multiplication easy.

The manner of the employment of wealth supplies the index of character. The narrative shows that this was a lovable young man. Mark tells us that Jesus, looking upon him, loved him. What a marvel of earnestness has the artist put into the face of the Master. No one ever looked at another as the Christ looks at this young man, unless he were intensely interested in his welfare. There is always something attractive in the rosy beauty of youth, something winsome in the impulsive delight in life, the quick outgoing of affection, the bright unjaded interest in the moving world. There is a pleasure in having to do with those whose souls are not all burnt out, who are not mere human cinders. There is an inspiration in youth in very delightful contrast with the discouraged people who think that everything is going to pieces, and who are afraid to take hold and lift, and so help things to go forward.

This young man had not been wholly spoiled by

wealth. He had not been depraved by it. He had not gone down into the depths of sin. In the eyes of the world he was a remarkably exemplary young man. He thought that he was in earnest in following Moses, just as so many nowadays think that they are in earnest in following the Lord Christ.

The world has been attracted to the intensity which the artist has put into our Lord's regard of the young man, but has given little thought to the message of those eloquent hands. But Hofmann did not forget to introduce the poor with their appeal. They are placed almost out of the picture, so strongly do the brilliant lights on the two chief figures monopolize the attention. The artist has come near to making a separate picture of them. The suffering, emaciated old man, lame, as shown by the cross-handled stick under his arm, worn and exhausted, as shown by his bowed form and his drooping lids, only partly clothed, speaks to the eye of sympathy as one in sore necessity. And the young woman whose face, too early creased and drawn by privation, and whose intense gaze, as if aroused by overhearing the command of the Saviour, regaining something of its charm in the upspringing of hope, tells the story of the pathos of poverty.

The evangelist Matthew tells us that, in mentioning the commandments, Jesus spoke of the summing

up of the second part of the Law, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. That went to the very core of the life of this young man. There were the poor everywhere about him: Lazarus, the beggar, and Bartimæus, the blind man, and the cripple at the beautiful gate. Was it true, that claim of his, that he had kept the Law's requirement from his youth up? Did he love the poor as himself? He had asked how he might purchase his way to the eternal habitations. The Law said not that he should love others more than himself, but it did say he should love them equally with himself.

Here was a young man capable of great things in the world, capable of unmeasured delight in the service of God by serving his fellow men. But he was missing it all in his self-satisfied selfishness. He was living for self, as, most unfortunately, thousands are doing to-day everywhere. They, as he, are missing the inmost spirit of the gospel, the disposition of the Lord Christ.

At this point enters the third picturesque detail furnished by the evangelist Mark: when our Lord told him to sell all that he had and distribute it to the poor, Mark says, "His countenance fell." The artist had seen that expression on many a face in his own land, or he could not have fixed it on his

canvas. It is the facial expression seen in every country, the expression of a spoiled child; I regret to add, the expression also of a spoiled adult, the discontented man or woman. Often have you seen it with even more of pettishness betrayed in it. But, however you have seen it, better than words it spoke the unformed or ill-formed character, wilful, selfish, un-Christlike. Such an expression carries a sad prophecy with it. Somewhere in every such life approaches an experience of suffering, whether suffering that will scorch or will refine. Whether as discipline or as penalty, those having that look must suffer pain. Happy are those to whom the pain can bring blessedness.

For, after all, the only life of eternal pleasure is the life of God, and of those who become like God. Multitudes would like to have Christ save them by leaving them alone; but leaving them alone is leaving them to death. Christ saves men by breaking down the idols in the heart, by breaking up the attachment to the world. To every one, soon or late, comes the demand to relinquish all that he has. Some day we must release our hold on all that we own of this world's possessions. He who yields them only when wrenched away by the strong death-angel, loses this life and the next. He who yields them in this life

to the service of his gracious Lord, gains the whole of this life and all the full gladness of the world to come.

It has been hastily assumed by many that this young man, having made a displeased refusal, failed forever of the kingdom of which he so eagerly had thought. That is a conclusion quite unwarranted by the narrative of the evangelists. It is true that the disciples demanded, "Who then can be saved?" Notice that they did not ask, "What rich man can then be saved?" Apparently they wanted to know whether all men were not involved in a common danger because of the universal clinging to wealth. Our Lord did not discuss the details of the matter, but opened the door of hope by saying, "With God all things are possible." It is evident that He intended them to understand that there remained a possibility in the life of this young man, and of any other rich man, that, by the grace of God, that slavish disposition could be changed; the chief place in his heart might cease to be filled with money or self, and God might yet be enthroned and adored. Therefore it should not be said that the soul of this young man was lost. What was the final direction of his life is not revealed to us. If, in some later day, the influence of the Messiah or some other operation of the Holy Spirit gave God the first place in his life,

all was well. But we do not know; the narrative draws a curtain over his future, as if to teach man that, by placing our affections wrongly, we may miss altogether the mansions of the sky. So, therefore, the expression on the young man's face becomes typical of the man who is putting his trust in riches, whose soul is in peril from which only the omnipotence of God can save him. It is with such a thought that we should look on the picture.

The two faces are before you. Which do you prefer? Which face would you choose to approach in likeness? Which characteristics would you wish to exhibit in your face as the years wear on? There is the face, fair, yet clouded, to be pleased only by petting, as a wilful child is pleased, gloomy or passionate whenever the toy of the hour is demanded or taken away—shall that be your face and your character? Or do you choose that other face, calm with eternal peace, sweet in its gracious tenderness, refined in its self-forgetfulness, intense in its compassionate devotion, impulsive in the energy of love? Shall His be your face and your character? Difficult as it may seem to-day, nevertheless it is a possibility. He will shine out from your face when you become like Him. Men may look into your face, as they looked into the face of the martyr Stephen, and your face will seem to them as the face of an angel.

Oh, how little appear all the trappings of earth, all the marbles and mansions, all the crowns and coronets, how worthless the bravery of velvet and of ermine, the broad acres and the gilt-edged securities, when at last the soul lies, looking out beyond the fields of earth, beyond the mountains and the seas, having heard the call of Him whom no one can refuse; how the moments pass, brimful of destiny, moments freighted with the importance of ages! Then the wealth of earth is nothing; then the wealth of Heaven is all the world. Each of us must face that hour. What we do to-day with the demand of the Son of God has its momentous bearing upon the issue, in that pause between the two worlds.

There they stand before you. The one has a little of earth's wealth, only a little, and that little owns him. The other is Lord of all the earth and all the stars. Which is your leader in this hour as you step forth into that future which is all unknown?

XIV

REST IN THE LORD



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QUEEN LOUISE—*Richter*

XIV

REST IN THE LORD

"Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him: fret not thyself because of him that prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass."
Psalm 37:7.

THE sweep of the telescope over the starry heavens reveals suns and systems in bewildering myriads. This little earth of ours dwindles to petty insignificance. The day was not long ago, echoes of it still come from belated thinkers, the day when scientific writers scouted the Christian thought that God cares for His own, claiming that this earth is so mere a speck in the universe of matter that to suppose that it should receive so high distinction as a visit from the Son of God, or that individual men and women should be the objects of special thought and protection and provision, were nothing short of infantile imbecility.

Those in whom faith was strong, contented themselves for the present by saying that such writers were deficient in imagination, that the God so great as to

create and control so vast a universe must be sufficient to the care of all the universe he had brought into being. The Christian said to the scientist: "Your God is not so great as my God"; and then he waited.

As the years sped onward, men turned their eyes to the microscope: and became acquainted with a universe of matter so minute and yet so inconceivably vast in its incomputable multiplicity as to occasion marvel and amaze. The infinity of worlds became less marvelous in the view of the reflective than the infinity of microscopic life, organic, voluntary, instinct with activity and productiveness. In comparison with these, man's importance became immeasurably increased. The Creator of the infinitesimal was worthy of highest exaltation: and His ability and willingness to care for the humblest received irrefutable demonstration. The faith of the Christian was justified to science by the extension of man's knowledge.

But the time of such demonstration is long. Faith forever fronts some infidel sneer. The troubled souls who doubted and suffered from their doubt, were many before the truth was vindicated. There is always opportunity for trust. Were it otherwise man might stray from God beyond recall. Did we not feel our need of Him, we should become arrogant and stride on to evil.

Browning begins one of the most thoughtful of his poems with the words:

“How very hard it is to be
A Christian! Hard for you and me,—
Not the mere task of making real
That duty up to its ideal,
Effecting thus, complete and whole,
A purpose of the human soul—
For that is always hard to do:
But hard, I mean, for me and you
To realize it more or less,
With even the moderate success
Which commonly repays our strife
To carry out the aims of life.”

Achieving duty is a matter difficult enough for us all; but to realize the Fatherhood above and about us, to grasp and hold firmly that God is in our life for blessing all the time, that is something of surpassing arduousness, too often beyond our steadfastness of trust. It is a very old complaint that in the present world at times sin seems to prosper. Satan's rewards are prompt. The unscrupulous may forge ahead, and the honest man be left to trudge wearily. Does righteousness pay? is a question which forces itself upon the mind. Flung to one side, it presses up again, more insinuating, more aggressive, more insistent than ever. We conclude to entertain the

suggestion, and to argue the matter out; and there are the cold facts to be disposed of; and we are at a loss how to wave them out of existence.

It seems to require trust, and man wants to see. He is dissatisfied with all that he can not dissect and analyze; and he is in no wise content to defer the whole of the adjustment until after death. Of course, there is nothing new in all this. The Psalmist saw the wicked flourish as a green bay tree. The poets in all ages have mourned that they beheld

“Truth forever on the scaffold,
Wrong forever on the throne.”

But the world has always known that the Powers unseen are against the wicked, and the retribution is merely postponed. As our Lowell wrote after the disappointing and retroactive Peace of Villafranca:

“Patience a little: learn to wait:
Hours are long on the clock of Fate.
Spin, spin, Clotho, spin!
Lachesis, twist! and, Atropos, sever!
Darkness is strong, and so is Sin,
But only God endures forever!”

If the mystery of evil could have been explained to man, the complete details would have been published long ago. We are here with it overshadowing

us, and what can we do but trust? Even here we can perceive compensations and even blessedness overtopping the evil. Shall we suppose that the Deity, who implanted in men the sense of justice, has no clearance of His administration when men shall know enough to weigh the unfolded mystery?

When all is considered, we acknowledge that spectacular heroism is comparatively easy. The best in man and woman comes out in the presence of the world. The unheroic they intend to cloak, suppose that it is cloaked. It is the obscure heroism which is hard. Men will put down more on a subscription paper than they would give in the secrecy of a collection plate. I know of a church where it was announced that in the membership list soon to be published those who gave statedly to the support of the church would be separately indicated. The number of visits made to the treasurer's office in the next two weeks was significant.

It is the obscure martyrdom that is hardest to bear; yet the unwritten sufferings of the holy Christ are the greater part of what He endured for man. As we are the more refined by suffering, as we rise in intimacy with Him, we may enter somewhat into that life of self-effacement; but, at our best, we shall fail of what must be the greater part. An appreciation of this has nerved many a witness for God to

endure in the obscurity of his life, knowing that the Saviour for our sakes suffered inconceivably more. This world is not a world of righteousness, and the pure and good and true who are in it have for their mission the betterment of the world. The process is slow, but the ascent is measurable; and each ascending life bears up others in its progress, and inspires others to stand and to advance for the right's sake.

Apart from our relation to God, a healthful common sense dictates that we should cease from fretting, and carry our burden with strong and cheerful step. Man was made to walk erect. The discouraged, in their stoop, handicap their own success. Man can do more and better when he breathes with full inspiration and treads with firm and vigorous stride. Fear and fury are hard on the heart's action. We may not be pleased with events, but why should we render ourselves incapable of bettering events? Worry wears worse than work. Take those four w's, which I wrote to a friend years ago, with you through all your life. You will find that the saying is true, and you may find how to substitute the right kind of work to render worry unnecessary.

Many a man has passed through a critical period in business complications, and weathered it triumphantly, merely because there were hope and courage

in his heart, which impressed the world, and continued confidence. That might be the outcome of mere physical and mental force; but our text suggests that even when we might otherwise yield to discouragement, the Christian has something to buoy him up in the day which might bring despondency. It is the part of the Christian to go on with the duty of the present, and wait for deliverance or the outlet, whatever it may be, which the Father in Heaven has planned. So may one work with good confidence, without the interruption which apprehension might occasion. The work will be better, and the gray hairs fewer after the strain is over.

It is natural to some persons to fret often, or always; it is natural to most persons to fret in times of pressure. There are times when it is hard to be philosophical and happily expectant. After disasters and failures it takes an unusually resilient spirit to think that everything will go well thereafter. When one has had a principal part in things, it seems unlikely that all will be as well in the absence of one as important as most persons imagine themselves to be. The truth is that God is quite able to take care of it, and the event may show that our extraordinary ability was not missed; but it is difficult for one to believe that such could be the case, and in the absence of that faith men worry.

Bulstrode Whitelocke, member of the famous Long Parliament of England, chairman of the committee which impeached Lord Strafford, member of the Westminster Assembly which drafted the Confession of Faith and the catechisms, a man of commanding importance in the England of his own day, was sent by Cromwell in 1653 to Queen Christina of Sweden to negotiate a treaty. He came to Harwich to take ship, and tossed on his bed during the earlier part of a stormy night, while he worried about the distracted condition of the nation, which even the strong hand of a Cromwell could not hold in quiet. A confidential servant whose bed was in the same room, discovering that his master could not sleep, said to him:

"Pray, sir, will you give me leave to ask you a question?"

"Certainly you may," was the answer.

"Mr. Whitelocke," said the man, "are you the manager of the world?"

"No," replied the ambassador.

"Pray, sir, don't you think that God governed the world very well before you came into it?"

"Undoubtedly."

"And pray, sir, don't you think that He can take care of it while you are in it?"

To this practical manner of putting things the

statesman had no ready answer; but he gave up for the time being the management of the world, closed his eyes, and fell into a restful slumber.

Concerning our individual duty in the case, we may well give thought, whether we have done our whole part; for the administration of this world is consistent, and man is required to do his part in all things. Folding the hands and expecting corn to get itself planted is a quick way to no crop. Man's mental powers were given for use, and all other powers. So far as concerns our proper part we should interrogate ourselves; but, after we have done our best, to worry is to exhibit a lack of trust in our Father. What if things should go wrong from man's point of view, God has a higher and broader purpose, and in good time we shall understand. Ours should be the strong trust of that child of God who wrote:

"And let the storm that speeds me home
Deal with me as it may."

This trust is not easy in the mind grooved to the world's way of thought. The world wants to see, to lay its hand upon the rail to test its security, to press the plank with wary foot to prove its firmness. Matters go awry in your life and mine; and it is no light thing to find our strong staff broken, our ex-

pectation fail. The higher the importance of the affairs, the greater our solicitude. Moreover, there are times when the damage is indisputable and beyond repair, when we see bad men gaining influence and the true cause suffering from their falsehoods and their plots. Even so, it is for us to trust, and to keep from fretting. The Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters; yea, than the mighty waves of the sea.

If ever a man had excuse for worriment, it belonged in the experience of Martin Luther, when he stood, as it seemed, against the world. He had his days of depression, his thoughts of discouragement. "At one time," so he wrote, "I was sorely vexed and tried by my own sinfulness, by the wickedness of the world, and by the dangers that beset the Church. One morning I saw my wife dressed in mourning. Surprised, I asked her who had died.

"'Do you not know?' asked she. 'God in Heaven is dead.'

"'How can you talk such nonsense, Katie?' I demanded. 'How can God die? Why, He is immortal, and will live throughout all eternity.'

"'Is that really true?' asked she.

"'Of course,' said I, still not perceiving what she was aiming at. 'How can you doubt it? As surely

as there is a God in Heaven, so sure is it that He can never die.'

" 'And yet,' urged she, 'tho you do not doubt that, yet you are so hopeless and discouraged.'

"Then I observed what a wise woman my wife was, and I mastered my sadness."

It is not likely that any one ever thought that God had died and that thus disaster came. But some have begun to question whether any God had existence, when it would seem as if He were indifferent to all the wrong and outrage of this world. And some who could not disabuse themselves of the existence of God, have questioned whether after all He were true and faithful and kind. When we see that which we love going to wreck, when the great shocks of life come upon us, Christians sometimes are not faithful, do not show their assurance of the loving purpose of their Father: and so grieve Him and dishonor Him before the world.

Gustav Richter was born in Berlin, August 31, 1823. He early developed artistic ability, and pursued his studies in his native city, and later in Paris and in Rome. After his return to Berlin at the age of twenty-six, his works were received with unusual popular enthusiasm. "The Christ Raising the Daughter of Jairus," which won a place in the

Royal Museum in Berlin, was adversely criticized by the more discriminating judges, because of the theatrical attitude of the Saviour, so different from the simplicity of the gospel narrative. After exhibiting another pretentious picture, "The Building of the Pyramids," Richter confined himself chiefly to portraiture, in which he executed his masterpiece, "Queen Louise Leaving the Palace," for many years a favorite picture in American art stores.

The picture is connected with an incident in the life of the queen, little known on this side of the ocean. She was the wife of Frederick William III of Prussia, who came to the throne in the year 1797, when Napoleon Bonaparte made his first attack on the German Empire, of which Austria was then the head. Frederick thought to take a safe course by remaining neutral; and he saw the humbling of the great German state, the Holy Roman Empire, founded by Charles the Great one thousand years before. He was drawn into alliance with France; but in 1805 he was so insulted by Napoleon that he turned to Russia, and the following year found the eagles of France at his gates. Napoleon had crossed the Rhine and concentrated his army in the vicinity of Jena. On the 14th of October, 1806, by a furious charge from the heights above Jena, the French threw into confusion a force much superior to their

own. The main body of the French moved forward, enveloping the embarrassed Prussians; and, before they could recover, the Emperor hurled upon them his reserves, even his own guard. Thus they were driven to the gates of Weimar, which, so close was the pursuit, the French and Prussians entered together.

On the same day the King of Prussia, at the head of another portion of his army, was driven back from the vicinity of Auerstadt; and, attempting to retire into Weimar, he found his troops thrown into confusion by the fugitives from Jena and the French pursuit. In a single day the entire army of Prussia was destroyed. Napoleon contemptuously remarked of the Prussian government: "They can do nothing but gather up the débris."

Tidings of terror flew far and wide. So complete had been the rout that it seemed to be the annihilation of the monarchy. The pure and beautiful Queen Louise, then only twenty-seven years of age, received the crushing tidings which told her that the kingdom had fallen, and she must go forth from her beloved home. At first she sank into uncontrolled weeping; but the necessity was on her, she must go forth from the palace in the presence of the people. Then there came to her the remembrance of the German custom that, when a pupil left his

school, the others went forth with him, singing the words of the psalm from which our text is taken: "Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him; fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass. Fret not thyself because of evil doers. Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him; and He will bring it to pass."

The young queen sat down at her piano, touched the keys, and softly sang that psalm. When she rose, her spirit was calm, her manner stately; and so she went forth to descend the broad stone staircase in the view of the terrified populace, brave to fire the army to feats of daring and to strengthen her husband in the days of their calamity. The old Hebrew psalm roused the might of faith which made her heroic. In God's good time the nation came to greatness; and the queen, who rests in marble whiteness in the dreamy chapel at Charlottenburg, found rest in the Lord to do her work, and to serve her short day with faithfulness.

Why should we look for an easy life in this world of battles, where the Prince of Heaven fell fighting against sin? God calls us to be brave for Him, for the world's emancipation, for our own triumph of character. The ambition of the sturdy warriors, your ancestors and mine, in the old Nordic forests, was to

be such warriors as to merit an entrance into the great palace, Walhalla, where the heroes gathered in the land of spirits to enjoy the triumphs their valor had won. Our Captain calls us to endure hardness as good soldiers that ours may be a nobler triumph in the palace of our King.

Yet it should not be thought that only in the next world lies the reward of the faithful. Our return is also here and now. As our Master by His words and His life revealed to the world the Father, so is it granted to us to reveal to the world the Christ. He has promised that His word shall not return empty. If we proclaim Him by lip and life, it is His to fulfil His engagement, His who never failed. So when we live and speak faithfully for Him, we may know that the work is done and the fruitage is sure. It is not always ours to see the full fruition, but we may be confident that we shall see it. The confidence is reward.

We are part of a great host, stepping forward to conquest. Our part may not be conspicuous, but it may be ours to contribute to the final triumph of the Son of God. We are the men behind the guns, un-inscribed upon the monuments of earth, but written in the Book of Heaven. Let us, therefore, be glad in the permission to share in the campaign which is setting the nations free. We are in the army of the

Redeemer. It is the service which is glorious; the future brings merely the recognition of the glory. Fret not thyself because of him who prospereth. Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass.

XV

TEACHING FROM A BOAT



XV

TEACHING FROM A BOAT

"On that day went Jesus out of the house, and sat by the seaside. And there were gathered unto Him great multitudes, so that He entered into a boat, and sat; and all the multitude stood on the beach. And He spake to them many things."

Matthew, 13:1-2.

THE Carpenter of Nazareth was a man of the people, and He could speak to the people in the homely, every-day speech to which they were accustomed. They felt that He understood them in all the life of work and wear and weariness, which they knew day by day.

In all ages a few have had distinguished position and peculiar pleasures, but the great mass of humanity lives an obscure and toilsome life. There has always been a class of persons since the dawn of civilization, who look down on the rank and file of humanity as the common people, regarding them as hardly worth much attention or thought. But Christ did not come especially for those who thought themselves the great and the noble. The larger part of

His time was devoted to those whose names were not recorded in any book of importance, who have passed out of memory except as part of the great multitude which followed the footsteps of a world-famous Personality.

In all ages there have been men who have had an eye to the people for their own selfish uses. They have courted the popular good-will, that they might lift themselves into prominence. It is characteristic of the Carpenter of Nazareth that He had no personal ambition. He appealed to the mind of the people because, without any expectation of homage or of tribute or of applause, His thought was for their welfare and their joy.

It is something to discover the people's view of the matter. That word, "individual," is significant. Primarily it means that which can not be divided; but this indivisibility includes also the additional thought of separation from all else. The individual is the being which has its own separate life as far as division can go. An individual looks through his own eyes and has a separate consciousness of his own, different from every one else in all the world. Whether one be poor or rich is something altogether accidental and external. Whether he be honored or ignored is also an outside matter. His own life and his own thought, his own pain and his own pleasure

belong to himself alone apart from every other being, however much beloved. The poor man has his own personal life: the obscure man his own individual feeling. The humblest life is to itself a distinct and separate universe.

A poet of the people, Nixon Waterman, has put into rime a description of the place in the world filled by those often called "the common people":

"A hundred humble songsters trill
The notes that to their lays belong,
Where just one nightingale might fill
The place with its transcendent song:
Fame comes to men, and with a smile
Some favored soul with greatness cloaks,
And leaves a thousand else the while
To be for aye just common folks.

"If only sweetest bells were rung,
How we should miss the minor chimes;
If only grandest poets sung,
There'd be no simple little rimes.
The modest, clinging vines add grace
To all the forest's giant oaks,
And 'mid earth's mighty is a place
To people with just common folks.

"Not we the warriors who shall win
Upon the battle-field a name
To sound above the awful din;
Not ours the painter's deathless fame,

Nor ours the poet's muse that brings
 The rhythmic gift his soul invokes;
 Ours but to do the simple things
 That duty gives just common folks.

"We are the multitudes of earth
 And mingle ever with the crowd,
 Elbowing those of equal birth,
 Where none because of caste is proud.
 Bound by a strange, capricious fate
 That ofttimes its decree revokes,
 Between the lowly and the great
 Are millions of just common folks.

"Fate has not lifted us above
 The level of the human plane;
 We share with men a fellow-love,
 In touch with pleasure and with pain.
 One great, far-reaching brotherhood,
 With common burdens, common yokes,
 And common wrongs and common good,—
 God's army of just common folks."

It was the recognition of this principle of the individuality of man that gave to the Man of Nazareth His power over the people of His day and all the days since. His own name for Himself was "The Son of Man." He appealed to the people, not with any of the pomp and dress-parade of the court, nor with any pretense of learning, nor with any ostentation of

holiness. He came to them as a man; and it was His heart that won their homage.

When the great strike occurred at the London Docks, a labor leader, Ben Tillett, who was prominent in that movement, was addressing a group of the dockmen. He knew that his associates would not listen to a sermon, and yet he knew that they had warm and honest hearts. Seeking to sway their minds, he began to describe with great power and tenderness the Man of Nazareth. He sketched the doings of our Master's every day, and he told them what he thought the Master would do if He were the proprietor of those docks. The crowd stood in fixed attention until he finished, and then one big, sinewy fellow shouted:

"Ben Tillett, I don't know who this Man of Nazareth is that you have been talking about, but I move that we give Him three cheers."

That freight-handler voiced with exactness the feeling of the men of the first century who had known the Master whom Ben Tillett tried to describe in the dock-yards. Wherever He went they followed in crowds, and He had difficulty in keeping them from making Him their King. It is more than likely that neither the men of the London Docks nor the men on the slopes of Galilee understood clearly the entire purpose of the Leader whom they ap-

plauded; nevertheless, they were attracted by His humanness, and under the right leadership they might be persuaded to give themselves utterly to Him.

With him everything was perfectly simple. He was yet a young man with all the spring and activity of his early prime. The pink had not faded from His complexion, nor had the poetry withered from His heart. He came from His carpenter-shop unspoiled of the schools, and He never attempted a single passage of high-flying rhetoric. He spoke to the people in their own language as simply as any artizan of all the number. He held them by the intensity of a personal magnetism with entire absence of all varnish and veneering. To them He was wonderful. To the polished aristocracy it was wonderful that He should be thought wonderful. They really could not understand what the people saw in Him. To them He was all out of joint with the revered tradition which ruled their lives.

A great artist has chosen this incident in our Lord's life as the motif for his brush: and his picture has long been classically typical of our Saviour's touch with human lives. Heinrich Hofmann was born in Darmstadt in 1824, as we noted before, and studied in various parts of Europe, chiefly in Italy. In 1862 he made his home in Dresden, where he was pro-

fessor in the Academy of Art and where he taught and painted for forty years. He is best known for his series of sketches of the life of our Lord: "Jesus in the Home in Bethany," "Jesus and the Rich Young Man," "Jesus in the Temple," "Christ in Gethsemane," and the picture connected with our text, "Christ Preaching from a Boat."

In this picture we see all the varied characters of an Oriental crowd: the shepherd boy with his pipe and his dog, the haughty, well-kept Pharisee, the children playing in the water, the women with the little ones about them, the young, the old, the blind, especially the blind. And what was it that brought them?

An English poet, Arthur Hugh Clough, who died in 1831, caught the significance of this scene, which he wrought into verse thus:

"Across the sea, along the shore,
In numbers ever more and more,
From lonely hut and busy town,
The valley through, the mountains down,
What was it ye went out to see,
Ye silly folk of Galilee?
The reed that in the wind doth shake?
The weed that washes in the lake?
The reeds that waver? The weeds that float?—
A young man preaching in a boat.

“What was it ye went out to hear
By sea and land from far and near?
A teacher? Rather seek the feet
Of those who sit in Moses’ seat.
Go, humbly seek and bow to them,
Far off in great Jerusalem.
From them that in her courts ye saw,
Her perfect doctors of the law,
What was it ye came here to note?—
A young man preaching in a boat.”

The explanation of the mystery the poet gives at the close of his poem, the answer from the Gospel that this young Man taught with authority and not as the scribes. Truly, that was impressive; but mere authority does not account for the fascination which drew to the Lord Christ the people of every community. It was not authority, but the perfect simplicity of His sympathetic contact. They were attracted by the approachableness of His person and the brotherliness which reached out to every timid sinner who came to Him, hardly hoping to be received. He never drew aside His robes to avoid pollution from the touch of any human being. He swayed the multitudes by His transcendent purity. He swayed them by his commanding presence. He swayed them by the unpretentious simplicity of His magnetic personality. During the century now past great emphasis was laid upon the teaching that

Jesus Christ was a man. It has not been sufficiently perceived and taught that Jesus Christ is more man than He is *a* man, that His personality represents all ages of man except that of decrepitude, and that His marvelous completeness represents both manhood and womanhood.

There were some things which our Lord did, which by the age in which He lived were not regarded as manly. If strong, courageous, noble men do such things in these days, it is because they have learned the tenderness of Christ. Here it is that Nietzsche misunderstood Him. The German philosopher admired the superman, the strong, masterful, surmounting hero, climbing to power on the bodies and souls of those he has overcome. He failed to see the true Superman, whose joy it was to place His loving arms under the sunken race of man, and to lift humanity to purity and power and eternal peace in the City with beautiful gates.

This is a greater study than can be condensed into a paragraph in a modern sermon. When the Christ is properly presented to the world, He attracts manhood and womanhood alike because of His broad humanness, because of His strong allegiance to the right, because of the tenderness of His sympathetic touch. But it goes further than that. When our Lord is properly presented, He appeals quite as

much to the children, not because He is a man, nor yet because He is kind, nor because He seems to them like a father. Jesus appeals to the children as one who was a child, as one who has never forgotten His child-feelings. The whole life of childhood has been far more dreary than it need have been, if only those who have had the leadership and the teachership, had possessed a little more of the child-heart.

The child of a literary man in this country was looking at Holman Hunt's picture of "Jesus and the Doctors in the Temple," and his father read to him the narrative as he gazed at the picture. When the father paused, the boy said:

"But isn't He God?" When informed that he judged rightly, the boy continued:

"How could they be old men?"

Not perceiving the drift of his son's thought, the father said:

"Jesus was only a boy about twelve years old."

"But how could He be?" questioned the little philosopher; "isn't He God?"

Then, catching the thought—that his boy could not understand how the God who created man could be younger than the men whom He had created—the father tried to help his boy by a few words. The

child sat thoughtfully for a while, and then he came to the matter which was vital to him. He had been thinking very fast for a little boy. He was eight years old, and, if at that time Jesus was twelve, then there was another question he wanted to ask, and he wanted to ask it just then.

“He was eight, wasn’t He?” demanded this little student of the Christ; and when told that he was correct, at once he understood that as Jesus was once a boy of eight, He had felt just as a boy of eight feels to-day. The child had been taught to pray to Jesus, and now he was sure that when he told his troubles to Jesus, Jesus would understand all about it. Jesus would know how His little boy felt. Tho we have passed that age, we too may find assurance in the knowledge that our Lord encountered the experience of all the ages of strength. The Captain of our salvation passed through to the end of His career in suffering and weariness and opposition. He sounded the depths of life, encountered the temptations of life, sinless, yet sympathetic. He never shrank from the touch of the sin-stained, no matter how deep the shame of that sin. Each one of us can come with a shame too bitter to confess to our fellow man, come in the confidence that we shall hear that voice of melody: “Thy sins are forgiven

thee. Sin no more." There is no necessity for preparation: the consciousness of need is sufficient preparation. As the old hymn says:

"Let not conscience make you linger,
Nor of fitness fondly dream;
All the fitness He requireth
Is to feel your need of Him."

The door is always open because His heart is never closed; the wanderer may be certain that he can always come home. A young girl in England wearied of restraint, and ran away from home, and was drawn into a whirlpool of misery and abandonment. Her mother continued to love her, as mothers do, and sought her passionately but vainly. At length she went to that noble philanthropist, Dr. Bernardo, told him her sad story, and asked him if there were anything he could do to find that loved daughter.

"Yes," said he, "I can do something. Get your photograph taken. Frame a good many copies. Write under the picture, 'Come home,' and bring them to me."

Dr. Bernardo sent the photographs to the saloons, music halls and other resorts of London to which such a girl might come, and had them hung in conspicuous places. Not long thereafter, in the course of her wicked life, entering one of those places, the

daughter saw her mother's photograph. Astonished to find that face in such a place, the girl examined it closely and saw the invitation and her own name written beneath. A rush of emotion and of sorrow came over her; the unconquerable love of her mother won her heart; she knew that she was forgiven, and that very night she returned to her mother's arms.

My brother, my sister, no matter how far you have wandered, the door is open to-night for you. Your Saviour is longing to receive you. Come into your Father's home.

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